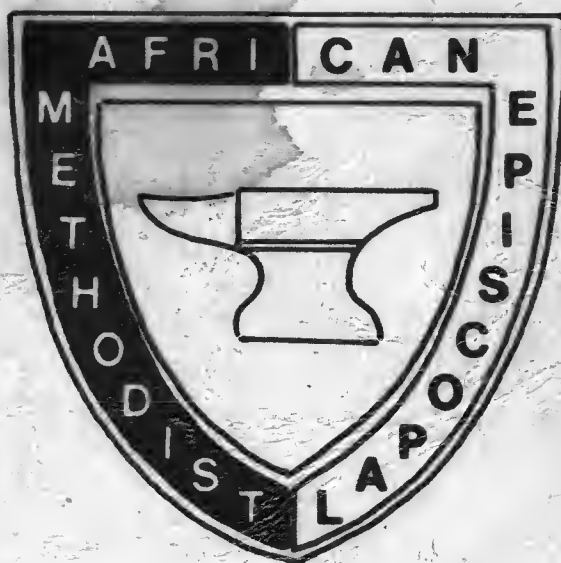


1827

1977

150 YEARS WITH



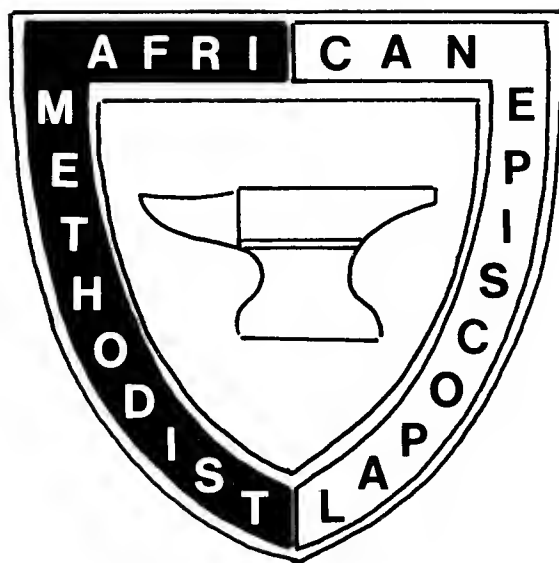
*MOUNT ZION*

African Methodist Episcopal Church

NEW BRUNSWICK,

NEW JERSEY

THE REVEREND HENRY A. HILDEBRAND, PASTOR



# *MOUNT ZION*

## African Methodist Episcopal Church

NEW BRUNSWICK,

NEW JERSEY



Serving this Community Since 1827

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FIRST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

336 PELHAM ROAD

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19119

Phone: (215) VI 3-4874

RICHARD ALLEN HILDEBRAND, *Presiding Bishop*

First Episcopal District  
336 Pelham Road  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To The Members of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church  
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Greetings to you on this Happy Occasion:

I heartily congratulate you, the members, of this historic church, on the completion of a century and a half of distinguished Christian service to the people of New Brunswick.

Your presence in the community for these 150 years is a visible witness of the power of God as it moves and works through the faith of humble people.

The presiding elders, pastors, and your sister congregations of the First Episcopal District, as well as throughout the African Methodist Episcopal Church, join me in paying this well-deserved tribute to you in this, your Sesqui-centennial celebration.

May this not only be an occasion for celebration, but may it also be a time for rededication to a larger and more meaningful ministry for God and the community.

Faithfully yours,

Richard Allen Hildebrand  
Presiding Bishop

*Richard Allen Hildebrand  
Presiding Bishop*



Fellow Christians:

Those of us who are privileged to presently be members of Mt. Zion Church have indeed made a certain conspicuous rendezvous with destiny. It has become ours to be members of the congregation in this year 1977, when we commemorate a century-and-a-half of our church's Christian witness to the greater New Brunswick community.

The history of the organization and development of this congregation almost defies human comprehension. No one knows precisely in whose fertile mind the seeds of this institution were first planted, but we do know that these seeds lodged in the minds of ignorant and unlettered folk, many of whom could not read nor write their own names. Some of them had been, or were still slaves, and yet the thought of worshipping God in their own way, and "under their own vine and fig tree" struck these mostly unknown and un-named folk as an idea whose time had surely come. From that humble and unknown origin, this church has made an unbroken trek across the pages of history, extending for 150 years.

As we reach this Sesqui-Centennial Celebration, we not only pause to re-evaluate and appreciate our rich and glorious past, but far more significantly, we also look to the future, and we dare to dream dreams and to make plans for the most challenging and exciting days that our church has ever seen.

We begin our 151st year with a firm commitment to re-locate our church in the heart of the inner city, and to build an institutional facility that will not only serve as a worship center for the members of our own congregation, but in a larger sense, will also seek to minister to the needs of "the other sheep, who may not belong to our fold."

So, on this historic occasion . . . "Let Mt. Zion Rejoice, Let the daughters of Judah be glad . . . Walk about Zion, and go round about her . . . Mark ye well her bulwarks . . . consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following . . . For this God is our God . . . forever and forever . . . He will be our Guide . . . even unto death."

Henry A. Hildebrand, Pastor

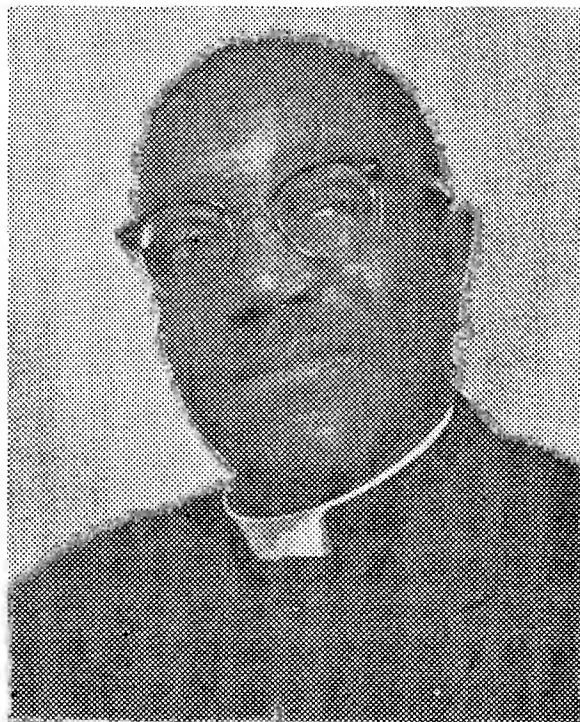


*Henry A. Hildebrand, Pastor*

Congratulations to Mount Zion Church on your Sesquicentennial Anniversary. Mrs. Johnson and I join with the pastors and churches of the New Brunswick District in saluting you on this historic occasion.

God's blessings be upon you as you begin your next century-and-a-half of distinguished service.

John Wesley Johnson  
Presiding Elder



ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

By Assemblyman Hamilton

WHEREAS, The Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, at 25 Division Street, New Brunswick, N. J., was founded in 1827 when the A.M.E. denomination was only eleven years old; and,

WHEREAS, The Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church was one of the first two churches located on the Somerset Street side of the Pennsylvania Railroad in New Brunswick; and,

WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hoagland, prominent organizers of the Church, gave to the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church the original land, which is still a part of the present Church property; and,

WHEREAS, The Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church was founded during this nation's shameful period of slavery to provide a place where black men and women could worship; and,

WHEREAS, The Church represents the oldest black congregation in Middlesex County, and is a daily reminder of the vitally important role that blacks have played in the building of our country both in the past and at present; and,

WHEREAS, The Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church is celebrating its 150th Anniversary in October, 1977; now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

That this House show its grateful appreciation to the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church for its outstanding contribution to the people of the City of New Brunswick for the past 150 years, and wishes to congratulate the Church on its 150th Anniversary; and,

Be It Further Resolved, That a duly authenticated copy of this resolution, signed by the Speaker and attested by the Clerk, be transmitted to the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church of New Brunswick.



SPEAKER, NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY



CLERK, NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

## *Proclamation*

WHEREAS, the Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, 25 Division Street, New Brunswick, New Jersey, was founded in 1827 at a time when the A.M.E. denomination was only eleven years old; and

WHEREAS, the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church was founded during this nation's shameful period of slavery to provide a place for black men and women to worship; and

WHEREAS, the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church is the oldest black congregation in Middlesex County; and

WHEREAS, the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church has contributed immeasurably to the spiritual, cultural and social life of its community and state; and

WHEREAS, the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church is celebrating its 150th Anniversary in October, 1977;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRENDAN BYRNE, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim

OCTOBER, 1977

as

### MT. ZION AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH MONTH

in New Jersey, and urge all citizens to give appropriate recognition to the many contributions of the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church to the people of New Brunswick and the State of New Jersey.

GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this fifteenth day of August in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventy-seven, and in the Independence of the United States, the two hundred and second.

BY THE GOVERNOR:

SECRETARY OF STATE

GOVERNOR





RICHARD J. MULLIGAN - MAYOR

CITY OF  
NEW BRUNSWICK  
NEW JERSEY  
(201) 745-5004

P R O C L A M A T I O N

WHEREAS, The Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, at 25 Division Street, New Brunswick, New Jersey, was founded in 1827 when the A.M.E. denomination was only eleven years old; and

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WHEREAS, The Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church is celebrating its 150th Anniversary in October, 1977;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD J. MULLIGAN, MAYOR of the City of New Brunswick, do hereby express my grateful appreciation to the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church for its outstanding contribution to the people of the City of New Brunswick for the past 150 years, and wish to congratulate the Church on its 150th Anniversary.



  
RICHARD J. MULLIGAN  
MAYOR

**The Sesquicentennial Celebration Program  
Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church  
October 1977**

The Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church of New Brunswick, New Jersey will celebrate the 150th year of its founding in October 1977. In this century-and-a-half, the church has served not only in the black community as a most meaningful religious organization, but also as a wealthy source from which its membership of able and talented citizens has flowed into the local and neighboring communities, rendering invaluable service.

During the church's sesquicentennial celebration in October, Mt. Zion will present a month-long program offering several events of spiritual, artistic, historical and educational value.

**Calender of Events**

Sunday, October 9th

4:00 P.M.

*"A Salute to Laymen"*

Wednesday, October 12th

7:30 P.M.

Symposium, *"The Black Church and the Struggle for Equality: Legacy of the Past/Challenge of the Future"*

George Street Playhouse  
414 George Street, New Brunswick  
Admission Free

Sunday, October 16th

11:00 A.M.

**Program Descriptions**

Speaker:

Mrs. Christine Brogdon Gilcrest, director of Lay Activities, African Episcopal Church.

This program will attempt to give recognition to the legion of laymen who have contributed to the organization, growth and development of Mt. Zion.

Speakers:

- James H. Cone, Union Theological Seminary
- Clement A. Price, Rutgers University
- Gayraud S. Wilmore, Rochester Center for Theological Studies

Guest Preacher:

The Rt. Reverend Ernest Lawrence Hickman, Bishop, African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Sunday October 16th

4:00 P.M.

Historical Play, "*Division Street*"

Admission free

This play, which portrays the 150 year history of Mt. Zion, was written by Ms. Ramona Lowe, granddaughter of Reverend J.H. Pierce who served as minister of Mt. Zion, 1891-2.

Saturday, October 22nd

7:30 P.M.

A Musical Celebration

Voorhees Chapel, Rutgers University

Admission Free

Mrs. Lillette Jenkins, director of music

This program celebrates the sesquicentennial in song.

Sunday, October 23rd.

Family and Fellowship Sunday

11:00 A.M.

1:00 P.M.

Fellowship Dinner

4:00 P.M.

A Service of Fellowship

Morning Worship

Pastor Hildebrand, Preaching

The Inspirational Chorus

Serving as Hosts

Guests:

The Reverend William L. Cody, Choirs and Congregation,  
Saint James A.M.E. Church  
Atlantic City, New Jersey

Sunday, October 30th

11:00 A.M.

Guest Preacher:

The Reverend H. Solomon Hill,  
Former pastor of Mt. Zion, 1938-1949. Presently  
pastor of First A.M.E. Church, Kansas City, Kansas.

Sunday, October 30th

5:00 P.M.

Banquet

Nelson Dining Hall, Douglass College

Tickets \$12.00

Speaker:

The Rt. Reverend Richard Allen Hildebrand  
Presiding Prelate, First Episcopal District, African  
Methodist Episcopal Church

THE BLACK CHURCH  
AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY

Legacy of the Past/Challenge of the Future

*A Sesquicentennial Symposium  
Presented By*

The Cultural/Community Affairs Committee  
of  
Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church  
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Made possible by a grant from  
The New Jersey Committee for the Humanities  
An Affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities

Assistance also provided by  
The George Street Playhouse

Reginald F. Hildebrand  
Program Coordinator

Wednesday, October 12, 1977  
7:30 P.M.

The George Street Playhouse  
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Program

The Rev. Henry A. Hildebrand. . . . .	Presiding	James H. Cone	"A Theology of Liberation for the Post Civil Rights Era"
Anthem	<i>"Lift Every Voice and Sing"</i>		
		Responses:	- Quentin Smith, Community Organizer, New Brunswick Outreach
Invocation	The Rev. William Augman, Pastor, Bethel A.M.E. Church, Madison, New Jersey		- Detra Bell, Student, Douglass College
Selection	Ms. Gwendolin Sims-Warren		- Charles Gray, Administrator, Nyerere Educational Institute
The Symposium		Questions and Comments	
Dr. Samuel D. Proctor . . . . .	Moderator	Hymn	<i>"Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken Zion City of Our God"</i>
Clement A. Price	"The Black Church and the Struggle for Equality in New Jersey"	Benediction	The Rev. William Smith, Pastor Trinity A.M.E. Church, Long Branch, New Jersey
Gayraud S. Wilmore	"The Black Church and the Struggle for Equality: An Overview"		



*Samuel D. Proctor*

**Samuel D. Proctor** is Professor of Education, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University and Senior Minister of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, N.Y.C. He served as president of Virginia Union University (1955-1960) and of North Carolina A. & T. State University (1960-1964). He has also served as Associate Director of the Peace Corps and Northeast Regional Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

*Gayraud S. Wilmore*

**Gayraud S. Wilmore** is Martin Luther King Memorial Professor of Black Church Studies and Director of the Black Church Studies Program at the Colgate/Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary. He is author of *The Secular Relevance of the Church*

and *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Examination of the Black Experience in Religion*. He is Chairman of the Theological Commission of the National Conference of Black Churchmen and is former editor of the journal, *Black Church*.



*James H. Cone*

**James H. Cone** is Professor of Theology at Union Theological Seminary. He has been a guest lecturer at over 140 colleges, universities and divinity schools, both in this country and abroad, and has appeared on radio and television programs throughout the country. He is author of *Black Theology and Black Power*, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, *The Spirituals and the Blues*, and *God of the Oppressed*.



*Clement A. Price*

**Clement A. Price** is Assistant Professor of History at Rutgers University, Newark, where he was chosen "Outstanding Teacher of the Year," 1976-1977. He is author of "The Beleaguered City as Promised Land: Blacks in Newark, N.J. 1917-1947" in *Urban New Jersey Since 1870* and co-author of "New Jersey Afro-Americans: From Colonial Times to the Present" in *New Jersey's Ethnic Heritage*.

## The Sesqui-Centennial Banquet Program

*The Reverend L. Sylvester Odom, Presiding*

The Hymn . . . . . "Faith of Our Fathers"  
The Invocation . . . . . The Reverend Leon Gipson  
The Solo . . . . . Mrs. Cordia Flemming  
Welcome and Greetings from the Mt. Zion Church Family. . . . . Mrs. John H. Carman

### The Presentation of Proclamations

The City of New Brunswick. . . . . The Honorable Richard J. Mulligan  
The Assembly of the State of New Jersey. . . . . The Honorable William J. Hamilton  
The State of New Jersey . . . . . The Honorable Brendan T. Byrne

The Blessing of Food . . . . . "Thanks Be To God" . . . . . The Mt. Zion Chorale



## DINNER

Music from Yesterday and Today . . . . . The Mt. Zion Chorale  
The 150th Anniversary Message . . . . . The Rt. Reverend Richard Allen Hildebrand  
The Solo . . . . . Mrs. Gwendolyn Sims Warren  
The Recognition of Former Pastors and Wives. . . . . The Reverend and Mrs. James W. Waters, 1959-1964  
Mrs. William Coit Cook, 1949-1959  
The Reverend and Mrs. H. Solomon Hill, 1938-1949

### The Expressions of Greetings:

The New Brunswick Council of Churches. . . . . The Reverend Mervin S. Gerhart  
The New Jersey Conference. . . . . The Reverend John Wesley Johnson

### The Special Recognition and Awards:

Honoring persons who have been a part of our Church Family for more than fifty years.

### The Sesqui-Centennial Citation:

Recipients: Mrs. Alice J. Archibald  
Mrs. Agnes L. Hildebrand

The Expressions of Appreciation . . . . . Pastor Henry A. Hildebrand

The Closing Hymn. . . . . "Glorious Things Of Thee Are Spoken, Zion, City Of Our God"

The Benediction . . . . . The Reverend Nathaniel L. Burgess

**Fifty Year (or more) Members of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church**

	Years
Miss Edna Van Dyke . . . . .	80
Mr. Herbert A. Marsh . . . . .	77
Mr. L. Wilbur Jennings . . . . .	76
Mr. Schuyler E. Jennings. . . . .	75
Mrs. Alice J. Archibald . . . . .	66
Mrs. Julia Crumidy . . . . .	65
Miss Annie L. Fletcher . . . . .	64
Mrs. Sara Thomas . . . . .	64
Mrs. Pauline Stout . . . . .	64
Mrs. Molita Schenck . . . . .	62
Mrs. Castella Ransom . . . . .	62
Mr. Thomas H. Jennings . . . . .	61
Mrs. Muriel J. Jackson . . . . .	61
Miss Ruth R. Bergen . . . . .	60
Mrs. Hulda Peterson. . . . .	60
Mr. John H. Carmen Sr. . . . .	60
Mrs. Cora Schenck. . . . .	60
Mrs. Anna J. Williams. . . . .	60
Mrs. Helen Smallwood . . . . .	60
Mrs. Gertrude Spadley . . . . .	60
Mrs. Elizabeth Lacey . . . . .	56
Mr. Harold Whittaker . . . . .	55
Mrs. Essie Wright. . . . .	55
Mrs. Shirley Reid. . . . .	55
Mrs. Mary Salter . . . . .	55
Mr. Alfred Eato. . . . .	55
Mrs. Christine Jordan . . . . .	55
Mrs. Thelma Miller. . . . .	53
Mrs. Maxine Gatling. . . . .	52
Mrs. Alease Henry . . . . .	51
Mr. James E. Jennings Sr. . . . .	50
Mrs. Ethel Sidney . . . . .	50
Ms. Jay Brown . . . . .	50
Mrs. Gertrude Wright . . . . .	50
Reverend Cyrus E. Grant . . . . .	50
Mrs. Virginia Harper. . . . .	50
Mrs. Sarah Curry. . . . .	50
Miss Edna Brown. . . . .	50
Virginia Middleton Woolard. . . . .	50

**The Participants in the Program**

The Reverend L. Sylvester Odom  
Pastor, Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, Trenton, New Jersey. President, Board of Education, City of Trenton

The Reverend Leon Gipson  
Pastor, Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church, Princeton, New Jersey

Mrs. Cordia Flemming  
Solist, The Mt. Zion Chorale

Mrs. John H. Carman  
General Chairperson, 150th Anniversary Celebration

The Honorable Richard J. Mulligan  
Mayor, City of New Brunswick

The Honorable William J. Hamilton  
Speaker of The House, New Jersey State Legislature

The Honorable Brendan T. Byrne  
Governor, State of New Jersey

The Rt. Reverend Richard A. Hildebrand  
Presiding Bishop, First Episcopal District A.M.E. Church

Mrs. Gwendolyn Sims Warren  
Soloist, Senior Choir, Mt. Zion Church

The Reverend James W. Waters  
Presiding Elder, Atlantic City District, The A.M.E. Church

Mrs. William C. Cook  
Teacher, Plainfield School System

The Reverend H. Solomon Hill  
Pastor, First A.M.E. Church, Kansas City, Kansas

The Reverend Mervin S. Gerhart  
President, The Greater New Brunswick Area, Council of Churches

The Reverend John Wesley Johnson  
Presiding Elder, New Brunswick District, A.M.E. Church

Mrs. Alice J. Archibald  
Life-long member, Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church

Mrs. Agnes L. Hildebrand  
Age 96, "Connectional Mother" of the A.M.E. Church. Mother, Pastor Henry A. Hildebrand and Bishop Richard A. Hildebrand

The Reverend Henry A. Hildebrand  
Pastor, Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey

The Reverend Nathaniel L. Burgess  
Pastor, Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, Bordentown, New Jersey

# *A Story of* **LIVING FAITH**

## **English Beginnings of Methodism**

Organized Methodism arose under the leadership of John Wesley, a clergyman of the Church of England. He did not intend to found a new denomination but his spiritual struggles during the decade before his "heart warming" experience of May 24, 1738, led into his great work. For more than a half-century he worked to "spread scriptural holiness throughout the land."

The movement began amidst the spiritual laxity of Oxford University life about 1729. John with his brother Charles and a small group of serious-minded students banded themselves together in a Christian fellowship of prayer, worship, study and Christian service. This earned them the derisive epithet of "Holy Club" or "Methodists."

The Wesley brothers served as General Oglethorpe's Chaplains in Georgia in the 1730's. After John's return to England, his Aldersgate experience gave him the spiritual assurance he had been seeking and his preaching took on the dynamic of a vital new spiritual dimension. For his "enthusiasm" he was denied use of the Anglican pulpits in 1739. As a result he turned to field-preaching and the organizing of those who responded into classes and societies for spiritual nurture.

He gave constant oversight to the expanding "Movement" by using lay "helpers," by his writings, by conferences, and by constant travel among the

societies. By the time of his death in 1791, his "Movement" had spread through the British Isles and across English-speaking America.

## **Methodism in America**

The story of the origin of the first Methodist Society in New York is familiar to most Methodists. In 1766, Mrs. Barbara Ruckles Heck, after breaking up a card game, went to her carpenter cousin, Philip Embury, and exhorted him to begin preaching "to save our souls." Thus spurred, Embury began preaching the Wesleyan gospel of "Free Grace" in his own home, and organized his hearers into a Methodist Society.

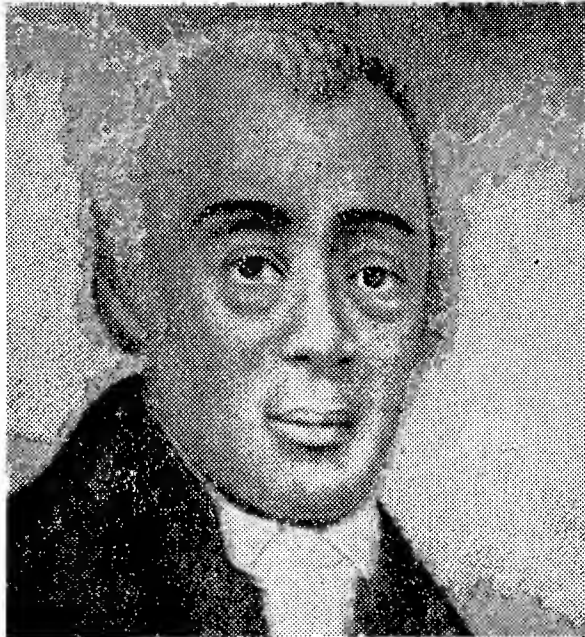
Soon Embury's house wouldn't hold the hearers and a sail loft was rented. Here, in 1767, the group obtained a powerful helper in Captain Thomas Webb of the British army whom Wesley himself had licensed as a local preacher three years earlier. In 1768, under the leadership of Webb and Embury, a Methodist Meeting-house was erected in New York and named Wesley chapel. Today it is situated amid the financial district of New York City at 44 John Street.

Captain Webb went to Philadelphia in 1767, and organized a Methodist Society there. Its nucleus may have been an earlier Whitefieldian group. Then, in 1769, under Webb's leadership, the historic Saint George's Church, which stands in the shadow of the Delaware River Bridge, was purchased.



In 1784, at the conclusion of the Revolution, John Wesley, now eighty-one years old, took the steps which resulted in organizing the Societies of his Movement in America into the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Francis Asbury was then consecrated General Superintendent or Bishop. By an Act of Congress the following tribute to Asbury is inscribed on the base of a monument to him in Washington, D.C.: "His continuous journeying through cities, villages, and settlements from 1771 to 1816 greatly promoted patriotism, education, morality and religion in the American republic."



*Richard Allen, founder of the A.M.E. Church, born a slave, bought his freedom and became the first Black ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized and became the first bishop of the A.M.E. Church.*

### **African Methodist Episcopal Church**

#### **The Founder: Richard Allen**

Richard Allen, the founder and first bishop of the A.M.E. Church was born February 14, 1760, a slave of Benjamin Chew of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At an early age, he, his father, mother and three other children were sold into the state of Delaware, where, on a farm in the neighborhood of Dover, he was brought up. About 1777 he was converted and soon afterwards, about 1780, he began to preach. His religion was of such a genuine sort that it affected every department of his life. As a result his master permitted prayer meeting and preaching in his house, and was converted himself. The master showed his conversion by making it possible for his slaves to become free. Accordingly Richard Allen and his brother

bought their freedom for \$2,000.00 Continental money.

Richard Allen left his master and began working for himself, with a job of cutting cord wood; then he was employed at \$50.00 (Continental money) a month in a brick yard; then he worked as a day laborer; then as a teamster hauling salt during the Revolutionary War from Rehobar, Sussex County, Delaware. During all of this time he preached whenever he could. After he had acquired experience, he began to travel from place to place preaching. Like Paul, he worked with his hands for his own support as he preached. In the fall of 1783, he was in Wilmington, Delaware; later and until spring of 1784, he traveled and preached in New Jersey, after which he traveled and preached in Pennsylvania.

In February 1786, he came to Philadelphia and preached at St. George's Methodist Church and at different places in that city where there was a large colored population. It was out of St. George's Church that Allen and his followers marched. This was the protest and march which caused the birth of African Methodism.

### **The Birth of African Methodism**

The rise of the African Methodist Episcopal Church came about as a direct protest against racial segregation as was then practiced within the body of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Richard Allen, the first Negro ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church, soon found that he and the other Negro members of St. George's Church in Philadelphia, were increasingly becoming a major problem to the other more affluent members of the congregation.

After being assigned to their "special pews" very often they were forced to vacate them to make room for their Christian brothers whom our common Father had chosen to create with fairer skin. After several embarrassing and humiliating incidents, Allen and his followers withdrew from St. George's Church, and retired to an old abandoned blacksmith shop on the corner of 6th and Lombard Streets, where the African Methodist Episcopal Church came into being.

From the year 1787, when the Negro members withdrew from St. George's Church in Philadelphia, until the year 1816, Negroes in New York City, Salem, New Jersey, Wilmington, Delaware, and Baltimore, Maryland, were experiencing the same indignities that had earlier befallen their brethren in Philadelphia. On learning of their plight, Richard Allen, now the leader of the Methodists of African descent in the city of Philadelphia, called them all to an organizational meeting in his blacksmith's shop at Philadelphia, and in this humble and unorthodox manner, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was formerly organized.

## The A.M.E. Growth to Maturity

The A.M.E. Church, as it has since come to be most widely known, has grown from this obscure beginning to be the second largest Methodist denomination in the world. It ministers to more than a million and a half members in continental United States, and perhaps nearly half a million more in Africa, India, South America, Bermuda and Canada.

The denomination is divided into Conferences, in which all of the churches within a certain geographical boundary belong. Mt. Zion Church is a part of the New Jersey Conference, comprising all of the A.M.E. Churches within the State of New Jersey. The Conference meets annually and receives contributions from the churches to carry on the denomination's program of education, missions and overseas commitments. Candidates for the ministry are ordained, and the pastors are assigned to the congregations that they are to serve.

### Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church of New Brunswick

African Methodism began in Philadelphia in 1787 with the preaching of Richard Allen. His strong doctrine of Self-help, Manhood and Involvement was heard by the black men of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware — even as far as Baltimore, Maryland. Not long after the A.M.E. Church was formally organized in 1816 the movement had its effect in New Brunswick.

Although no record is available to substantiate the theory, some scholarly clergy believe that Richard Allen himself may have visited New Brunswick. Certainly, he was a traveler of energy and a preacher of force. H. Solomon Hill, former pastor and President of Shorter College, has said, "I expect Richard Allen, himself, came here and preached just as the record says he did in Salem and Trenton."

Whether it was through a personal visit, or through the preaching of others, the blacks of New Brunswick joined the very first effort of the Negro in America to walk alone, in freedom and independence. They heard the call to be the instruments through whom God would plant the tree of faith on Division Street, a tree which would grow in freedom and independence through every wind of adversity, every storm of bigotry, every winter of indifference, every steaming summer of poverty and want — and it would not simply survive but thrive and bear fruit.

## The Power of our Faith, the Courage of our Fathers

God planted a tree in New Brunswick one hundred fifty years ago on this very spot of ground where the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church stands today. It was not an ordinary tree — it was a tree of Christian faith. In His grace, that tree has grown strong and stretched its protective branches far out into the community and has produced abundant fruit.

This is the story of the living faith of the Mt. Zion A.M.E. congregation. It has many beginnings. It has its Methodist beginnings in John Wesley, the great clergyman of the Church of England; it has its African Methodist Episcopal beginnings in Richard Allen, its founder in Philadelphia — these were the seeds. But the rich soil in which these seeds were planted was the soil of our great grandparents living, working, loving, laughing, singing, suffering, crying, dying right here on this ground hollowed by their Christian faith.

It was in this immediate soil that this church grew, and to appreciate the story we must see the local setting as it was 150 years ago. In this effort we are aided by the words of a former pastor, Reverend H. Solomon Hill, in an anniversary sermon preached many years ago.

"It was 36 years before the Emancipation Proclamation was signed which liberated four million Negro slaves. No one here was even born. Our great grandparents were not even their own. Somebody owned them . . ."

The nearest population figures are those of the first decade of the century. In 1810 the total population of New Brunswick was 3,043 inhabitants. Of these, 2,826 were free whites, 53 were free blacks and 164 were slaves. This was just 17 years before Mt. Zion was established and since then there were no great population movements through emigration, or massive residential shifts, the statistics would not be very different at the time of the founding of Mt. Zion, although there may have been a few more free blacks and few less slaves.

Merchants on Hiram Street and Church Street were advertising the wares they had for sale — these included "houses, lots, plantations, Negro men, wenches and children." At that time few in the community seemed outraged at the inhumanity of slavery or the indignity of the black women being called "wenches". But if there were not yet the violent winds which would sweep across the nation, at least there was a slight breeze of change in the state.

In 1820 an act was passed in the New Jersey legislature which gave freedom to every child born of slave parents after July 4, 1804 — after the males became 25 years of age and the females 21. This allowed the number of slaves to decrease slowly.

According to Barber & Howe, "Historical Collection of New Jersey — Past and Present" written in 1868, there were 10,851 slaves in New Jersey in 1810; but by 1829 this number had decreased to 7,557. So it is a safe estimate that there were approximately 8,000 slaves in New Jersey when Mt. Zion Church was planted, and that there was an increase in the number of free blacks. But we have no figures for New Brunswick itself.

That there was difficulty discerning who among the black population were free and who were still in slavery can be seen in a law which was in force in 1827, the year Mt. Zion was founded. It stated that if a Negro traveled from another state into New Jersey or from one county to another within New Jersey, he must carry papers signed by two Justices of the Peace verifying that he was a free man.

There is no known record to prove whether the founders of Mt. Zion were only those 53 or more free Negroes, whether they were only the 150 or more slaves or whether they were from both groups. Whatever is the case regarding the founders, it is almost certain that both free men and slaves have worshipped here, for even if the church was founded only by the free, it is likely that some masters would have permitted slaves such church attendance. Reverend H.S. Hill, in the above mentioned sermon, visualized the possibility in these dramatic words:

I can see a Negro mother bringing her baby into the church in her arms. This mother was a slave woman. She probably had a kind master, but you know nothing is like freedom. She had heard about the new law that would cause her baby to be set free when it had reached adulthood. She heard the minister preach about the goodness of God — how He brings things out right in His own time.

I can see the tears come into her eyes as she pours out a thanksgiving — filled soul — words of thanks to God that her child would not be a slave all of its life.

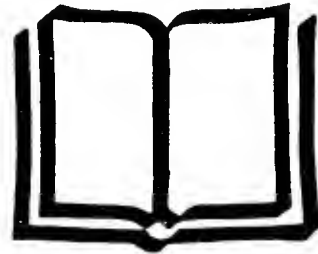
These people — our forerunners knew they had something to thank God for. They knew God was not dead for they were experiencing His mighty acts in history. They must have had some glorious times of rejoicing on this very spot.

They must have made some noise. They wanted to worship as they pleased. They wanted to sing songs they liked — 'Nobody knows the trouble I've seen', 'I'm so glad that trouble don't last always', 'Bye and Bye', 'I'm going to lay down', etc. They could not do it in the

churches which belonged to the white folks. That is why they came over here and started their own church.

This is the picture we must keep in mind through the telling of the story of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church if we are to grasp the mighty acts of God in the history of His people, if we want to experience anew the power of our faith and the courage of our fathers.

This is what our story is about.



### The First Property and Church

According to a deed registered in Somerset County Court House, a lot 30 x 13.5 was purchased for \$417.73 from Abraham S. Clark and wife, for the little congregation with a membership of 30 persons. Reverend H. Solomon Hill remarks about this, "Buying a lot for \$417.73, at a time when laborers wages were \$.50 to .75 a day, meant the average member gave 20 days' earnings (with our current five day work week, that would be almost a month's earnings) just to buy the land. They built a church on it at even greater sacrifice." Since this transfer of property apparently took place on December 12, 1829, it is reasonable to surmise that some other place, perhaps a private home, perhaps even that of Joseph and Jane Hoagland, served as a meeting place for the congregation for almost two years.

J.H. Morgan's "History of the New Jersey Conference of the A.M.E. Church" (1887) states that Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church of New Brunswick was organized in 1827 when the denomination was only 11 years old. It is known also that "Aunt Jane" Hoagland and her husband, Joseph Hoagland, were prominent organizers of the church and that they gave land to the church and the parcel is still part of the present church property. Piecing these few facts together it is possible to conjecture that the origin of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church went something like this:

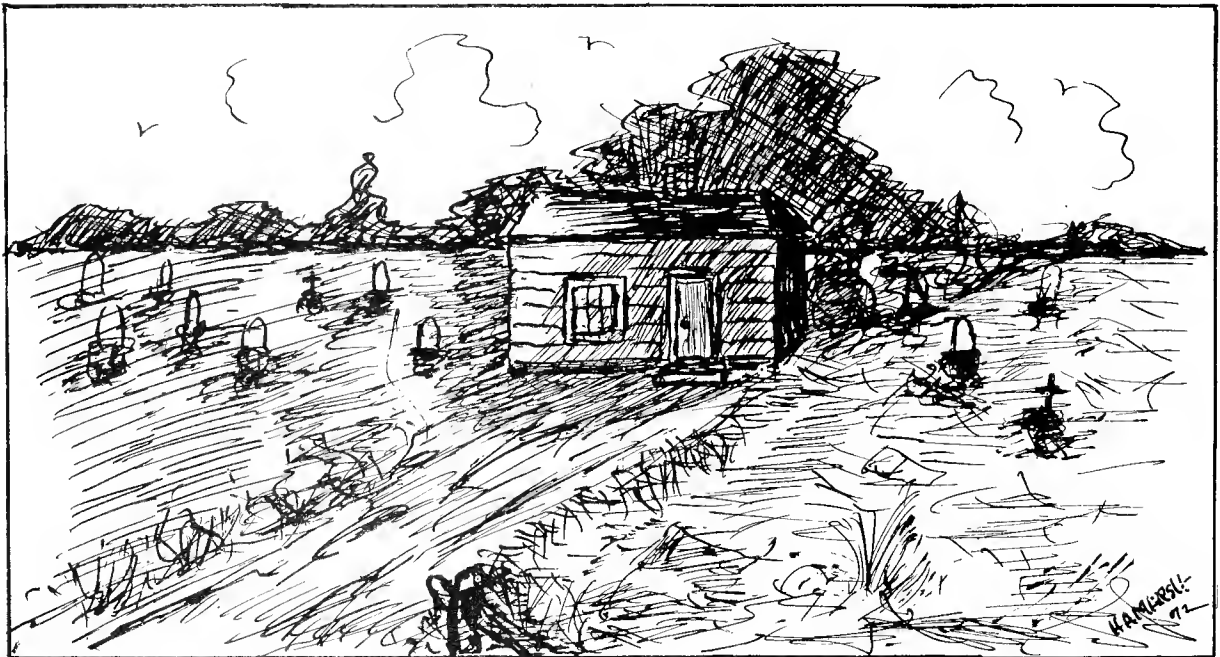
In 1827, Jane and Joseph Hoagland with other blacks in the New Brunswick area, perhaps with the assistance and encouragement of a circuit rider, organized to form a congregation of the A.M.E. Church.

They held meetings and prayed, perhaps in private homes, while they worked and saved to make their dream come true. The Hoaglands contributed a parcel of land to which the land purchased in 1829 was added and the first church was built. Other interpretations are, of course, possible but these facts are clear.

1. The congregation of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church was organized in 1827.
2. By December 12, 1829, they held title to property on Division Street in New Brunswick on which the first church was built.
3. The first church was a small, frame structure that looked like "the little red schoolhouse" so dear to the hearts of our forefathers. There was a burying ground around it.

Brother Wright. He was later succeeded by Brother Saunders. Still later, Brother Josiah Henson who loved and devoted his spare time to music, desired to organize a choir. Some strongly opposed this, feeling they could ill afford to pay for an organist. Others didn't like organ music. Considerable time would pass before the first Mason and Hamlin organ was secured.

Not only did the first congregation lack musical instruments, during the early days of the church there were no regular pastors. Circuit riders pastored the church. Morristown, Rahway, Trenton, Pennington, Freehold, Manalapan and New Brunswick for several years comprised the Trenton Circuit. Brother Joseph Hoagland acted as minister in charge until the conference began to send ministers. Men used to sit on one side of the church at that time, and the women on



*This sketch by Herbert Marsh depicts the first church as described in early historical accounts.*

The first church and grounds as they have been described in a number of historical sources have been illustrated in a line drawing by Herbert Marsh reproduced here.

Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church and St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church were the first two churches this side of the Pennsylvania Railroad. At that time, the railroad was not elevated. The worshippers used to bring fagots with them to make the fire. Sometimes the spiritual fire would be so great that other heat was not needed.

There was no musical instrument in the first church. Singing was rendered by the congregation without accompaniment. Later, a melodeon was installed, and played by a member, Sister Sibina Clark.

The first director of singing was a white man,

the other. Officers sat in the "Amen Corner."

During its 150 year history, there have been over 60 pastors. The large number of pastors the church has had was partly due to the fact that the term of service was limited, and many of the pastors served for terms of three years or less! As a matter of fact, it wasn't until the assignment of the Reverend H. Solomon Hill that Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church in New Brunswick had a pastor serving for any length of time. Two former pastors in the early period of the church were made bishops – Willis Nazery, elected bishop in 1852, and Alexander W. Wayman, elected bishop in 1864. The first pastor assigned by a bishop was the Reverend Richard Robinson, in 1832. The complete list of pastors appears later in this volume.

## Civil War Years and Reconstruction

Fort Sumter was fired on at 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1861 and this signalled the beginning of the bitter, bloody Civil War. The first black man to lose his life in the Civil War was Nicholas Biddle who was shot down in that same month as his Pennsylvania company was on its way to defend the nation's capital. Biddle was a free man, but his example and that of other free blacks was quickly followed by ex-slaves who enlisted in the Union Army and served with valour. It is not known how many men from Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church may have served, but in view of the service records of our boys in all of America's military crises, we can be sure that the years 1861 to 1865 witnessed a number of young men from Mt. Zion fighting for the Union.

It was in that fateful year, 1861, that the congregation of Mt. Zion decided that a new church should be built. In October the sum of \$1,233.25 was borrowed from Alfred B. VanDerhoef. Trustees who signed the bond binding themselves and their possessions for twice the amount borrowed if the money was not duly paid were: Primus Quick, Charles Dumont, Joseph Garrison, York Williams and Samuel Van Horn. The bond for the new edifice was paid in full April 28, 1868. In order to construct the new church some of the graves in front of the old church were removed, and the building was located closer to the street.

The A.M.E. Church was flourishing in many areas during the next decade. Daniel A. Payne, a bishop of the A.M.E. Church was instrumental in carrying out the purchase of Wilberforce University from white Methodists in 1863. He served as its first president and was one of the few blacks of his time to hold the office of college president. In 1872, over one hundred years ago, the New Jersey Conference was formed. Formerly New Jersey was part of the Philadelphia and New York Conferences. Churches from New Brunswick to Cape May were stations and charges in the Philadelphia Annual Conference. The rest of New Jersey affiliated with New York. In 1872 all of New Jersey became a separate Conference by a resolution of the General Conference held in Nashville, Tennessee that year. Reverend Joshua Woodlin was a delegate to that General Conference and it was he who offered the resolution which was passed upon favorably by the Committee on Boundaries.

While the A.M.E. Church was growing steadily in many areas, Mt. Zion in New Brunswick was still struggling for survival. The General Conference of 1872 adopted the Dollar Money System, the A.M.E. Connectional Tax. Mt. Zion that year had 63 members who contributed a total of \$42.00 in Dollar Money. Four years later the struggling Mt. Zion

congregation suffered a very serious setback. Reverend Redmond Faucett was informed that the church building had been condemned by city officials. This was between 1876 and 1878.

Again, money was borrowed and a mortgage given to begin construction. The main auditorium was completed in 1881 and dedication took place on October 16th of that year. The money was paid and the mortgage cancelled in 1892, during the pastorate of Rev. J.H. Pierce.



*Rev. J. V. Pierce,  
Pastor 1868-1870*

## The Turn of the Century

In 1894 when the congregation wanted to build a parsonage, money again had to be borrowed. But the people, accustomed to sacrifice, went forward with their plans and the parsonage was built. Final payment of that debt was made during the pastorate of Reverend W. H. Hicks who served Mt. Zion in 1911-1912.

Reverend J.W. Morrishow served the church during the years of World War I (1914-1917). During this period the church was repainted. His successor, Reverend Samuel Sturges (1918-1921) remodeled the parsonage. The "Roaring Twenties" ushered in some significant changes for Mt. Zion Church. Reverend J.H. Jackson led the way during his pastorate (1923-1924). He laid the plans for an extensive improvement program. In order to finance it, \$4,000.00 was borrowed. He had the church basement completely renovated and he purchased a beautiful new organ. The work continued through the administration of the next pastor, Reverend C.G. Collins (1925-1927) who had the church itself redecorated and painted and had the new organ installed. The organ was dedicated in impressive ceremonies as the congre-



*Rev. J. Morrishow,  
Pastor, 1914-1917*

gation thrilled to the performance of the famous Carl Diton at the console.

Miss Elva Miller became the church organist and was assisted by Miss Julia Jennings. These ladies later became better known as Mrs. Charles Speights Sr. and Mrs. Julia Crumidy respectively. There were so many keys and stops and valves and buttons on the new organ that the young ladies had some difficulty with the instrument. A professor Mark Thomas of Memphis, Tennessee was in the area at the time and he took over the direction of the choir and instructed the young ladies in the operation of the complicated organ. He served Mt. Zion for one year.

### Centennial Celebration

By the time the centennial of Mt. Zion was to be celebrated the church was in beautiful condition, the new organ was brightly polished, the choir was well prepared and the people full of enthusiasm. It was October, 1927. Reverend Isaac Horsey was pastor. There is still preserved in the church's archives an account of the anniversary celebration written in the beautiful handwriting of Mrs. Gertrude P. Titus. The committee in charge of the centennial celebration included: Alice Hoagland, Annie Cummings, Annie Jackson, Ada Jennings, Jennie Nixon, Lilian Claggett, and Harriet VanDerveer. The centennial celebration program scheduled a full week of anniversary events highlighted by a banquet on Thursday, October 27th and brought to a successful close with services on Sunday, October 30th. Reverend J.H. Jackson returned for the occasion and delivered the anniversary sermon.

### The Depression Years

In contrast to the joy of the centennial celebration was the anniversary observance two years later. It took place on October 31, 1929, just two days after the stock market crash hurled the nation into deep depression. Mt. Zion had to begin its second century, much as it had begun its first — in desperate poverty. It was during this period that the Willing Workers Club was organized. The "Great Depression" as it was called tested the faith and the courage of the people of Mt. Zion even while they were being visited by deep sadness and tragedy of another kind — death.

Reverend I.C. Horsey died in July 1930. Reverend J.H. Jackson returned once again to Mt. Zion — this time to complete the term of the late pastor. In May of 1931 Reverend Jackson died as a result of an automobile accident and again the congregation was deprived of an outstanding leader in the most difficult of times. So Reverend R.B. Smith came to finish that term, but he too would not remain at Mt. Zion very long. On June 14, 1932 soon after Bishop W. Heard had been appointed to succeed Bishop J.H. Jones to the First Episcopal District, Reverend Smith was appointed Presiding Elder of the Camden-Trenton District. During his short administration, however, Reverend Smith did have the church entrance altered. A new concrete stoop, built by contributions from the Imperial Dramatic Club, added much to the appearance of the church. Mrs. Harriet Van Derveer was president of the club at that time.

Reverend George H. Crayton finished the term of Reverend Smith and served Mt. Zion until 1935. Even in the very heart of the depression Reverend Crayton managed to make some improvements in the interior of the church. Reverend Charles Crumidy succeeded Reverend Crayton and with the slow, painful road to recovery in the nation's economy in progress Reverend Crumidy introduced some significant changes in the administration of the church's affairs. He managed to reduce the church mortgage, making many personal sacrifices in the effort. He installed a new system of bookkeeping and business administration which improved the financial standing of the church and he initiated the project of keeping a permanent official record of the church's activities. During his tenure two ministers were ordained — the late Reverend Samuel I. Matchett and Reverend Cyrus E. Grant, now a member of our Pulpit Staff.

In 1936, the 107th anniversary celebration had a special significance. This was the era of the NRA, the CCC, and the second term of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States. National recovery still had far to go, but there was a glimmer of hope apparent in the anniversary celebration which extended from Tuesday October 27th to Monday evening November 2nd. One of the highlights of the





*A group of church dignitaries on the church steps during the pastorate of Reverend Morrishow (1914-1917).*

week was the sermon of Reverend Gaines, the guest speaker from Ebenezer Baptist Church. The theme of the sermon was appropriately for that occasion "In the name of God, go forward." A faded copy of the newspaper account of the entire week's observances is in the church archives.

### **Through the War Years**

Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church was fortunate to have Reverend H. Solomon Hill serve during the later part of the thirties, through the war years up to the advent of the fifties. During those eleven years it can truly be said that the church was stabilized for the first time in its long history. Reverend Hill raised large sums of money through clubs and organizations and sponsored Tag Days, Beauty Contests and many other events — all to help pay the great indebtedness of the church. Reverend Hill also initiated a college fund drive to enable eligible students to further their education. He helped to win for the blacks in the community a better employment opportunity and higher positions on a merit basis. He earned the respect of all because he was a true statesman and a

man of vision and courage recognizing true merit regardless of race, creed or color. During World War II he dedicated unlimited time for the servicemen through U.S.O. work.

Under his able leadership, the organ debt of \$1,300.00 was paid in full in 1939. The crowning achievement during his pastorate, however, was the ceremony which took place five years later when the full indebtedness of \$4,000.00 was erased from the books.

### **Burning the Mortgage**

Services marking the 117th anniversary of the church were held during the week of October 25-29, 1944. Bishop David H. Sims of the First Episcopal District delivered the anniversary sermon and officiated at the mortgage burning ceremony. It was the first time in over twenty years that the church stood free of debt. Mrs. Gertrude Barrett prepared a report on the ceremony which is preserved in the archives and which has been reproduced here to recapture the joy of that gathering.

The persons present at the Anniversary Dinner in 1929, just two days after the stock market crash, signed the register pictured here. The signatures of many of the venerable members of old Mt. Zion will be seen, although some are almost obscure from age.

Persons present  
Oct 31-1929

Hester Moore Simmons

James H. Nison. & Adara Vanameer

Calvin T. Spivey Alfred J. Woolsey

Annie M. Jackson George Schuch  
Orestia E. Doughty Julia M. Hester

Lydia Schenck Edith Middleton

Ada B. Kossing Virginia Middleton

J. W. Jackson Thelma G. Holmes

Harriet Van Derveer Eula B. Baskin

Ebra Hush Mary F. Hagerback

Abraham Perry Claudine Cummings

Henry E. Jennings Ruth Bergen

Lulu M. Crupper Huldin Petersen  
Olive Washington

Marion Lane W. R. Landon

Pauline Stout H. E. Hamelton

James E. Jennings Sarah M. Hush

Edith A. Jennings John A. Jennings

Samuel W. Radford Alice W. Hoagland

Wm F. Jennings Lilian H. Thompson

Lillian R. Jennings Patsie Brown

Lillian R. Jennings  
Lillian R. Hamelton



*This is a copy of the cancelled mortgage which was  
burned in special ceremony on October 29, 1944.*

7382 492 6891 708.1009

**Dated** December 4, 1924

MT. ZION AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH NEW  
BRUNSWICK, N. J.

**CANCELLED** TO  
**The Middlesex  
Title Guarantee and Trust  
Company**

**Mortgage**

Received in the Office of the Clerk  
of the County of Middlesex on the  
17th day of December A. D. 1924  
at 3:10 o'clock P. M., and Recorded in  
Book 419 of Mortgages for said County  
page 492 etc.

*W. William Hilber*  
Clerk.

**THE MIDDLESEX  
Title Guarantee and Trust Co.  
NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.**

DEC 17 1924  
3:10 218



*Rev. H. Solomon Hill,  
Pastor, 1938-1949*

#### After the War Years

The sanctuary was renovated in 1946 at a cost of \$2,000.00. Church contributions increased and membership swelled. Missionary and educational activities greatly increased. Reverend Hill held a "children's church" during Sunday School on the second Sunday in each month. The children were trained to perform regular church duties at these services.

Reverend Hill devoted considerable time to community activities. He was President of the New Brunswick Branch NAACP; a member of the Board of Directors of the New Brunswick Urban League (quite active as an officer and one of its founders); a member of the Board of the New Brunswick Red Cross Chapter; and a member of the Bayard Street U.S.O. In addition, Reverend Hill has served on the Executive Committee of the New Jersey Council of Churches, the New Brunswick Council of Churches, as well as the Civil Rights Committee of the New Jersey Welfare Council, all of which demanded much of his attention.

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH ANNIVERSARY AND MORTGAGE BURNING CEREMONY AT  
MT. ZION A.M.E. CHURCH, NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1944

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The church was crowded to its capacity. Persons were standing in the vestibule and on the steps to witness the concluding service of the double celebration of the One Hundred Seventeenth Anniversary and the Mortgage Burning at Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Among the distinguished visitors in the audience were Mayor Chester Paulus and all of the City Commissioners, Pastors of the local churches, and Mrs. H.A. Hill, mother of the Pastor from North Little Rock, Arkansas.

A most excellent program was given, among the features being musical selections by the Senior, Young People's and Children's Choirs, the Gold Leaf Chorus of the Church, and an original poem "Building the Temple-Mt. Zion" written by Mrs. Tessie P. Hill. Bishop David H. Sims delivered a powerful, historical, comprehensive, and inspiring sermon on "Priorities of the Kingdom."

Tears flowed and "amens" vibrated through the rafters of this historical church building as the Bishop reviewed the conditions of the times during which the church was established and then challenged the politicians, the industrialists, the educators, and the church members to put the Kingdom of God first in all of their undertakings.

Following the sermon was the mortgage burning ceremony. The altar candles were burning on each side of the cross on the Communion table. The altar boys placed a small table and a large pewter loving cup just in front of the Communion table. The Bishop and the congregation then read responsively the Litany especially prepared for the occasion. Mr. Ernest Adams, representing the Trustees, had presented the cancelled mortgage to the Pastor, Dr. H. Solomon Hill, who in turn presented it to the Bishop, stating that this was the last of several weighty obligations which were on the church when the Bishop assigned him here over six years ago, and that he was proud to state that the church was now completely out of debt for the first time in many years.

After the responsive reading, the Bishop lifted one of the altar candles and lighted the mortgage which was being held by the pastor. The burning document was placed in the loving cup. While Bishop Sims offered the Prayer of Thanksgiving, the mortgage burned and the cup melted away. It was a scene never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Children and adults carried away pieces of the loving cup and the ashes of the mortgage to place among their souvenirs.

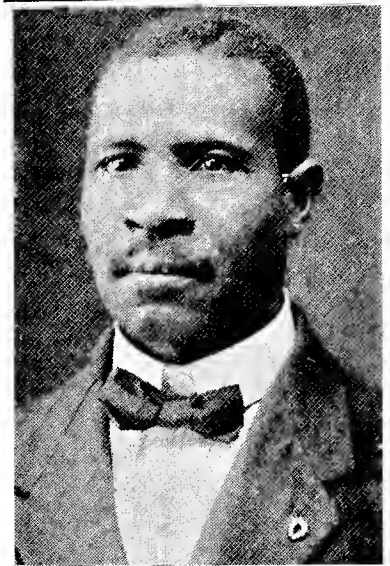
A total of \$431.59 was raised at this service. With increased faith and confirmed hope Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church continues her march up the King's highway.

Mrs. Gertrude Barrett, Reporter

Rev. H. Solomon Hill, Pastor

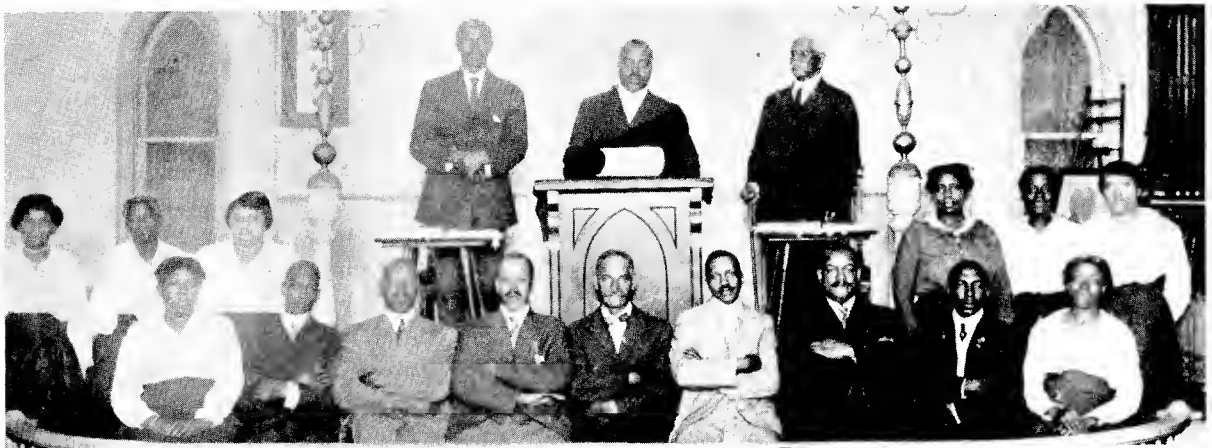


*Members in front of Mt. Zion around the 1890's – l to r: Elizabeth Marsh, Lewis Brown, Hannah Pierce, Laura Marsh, James Thomas and Gertrude Pierce.*



*Rev. W.H. Hicks  
Pastor, 1911-1912*

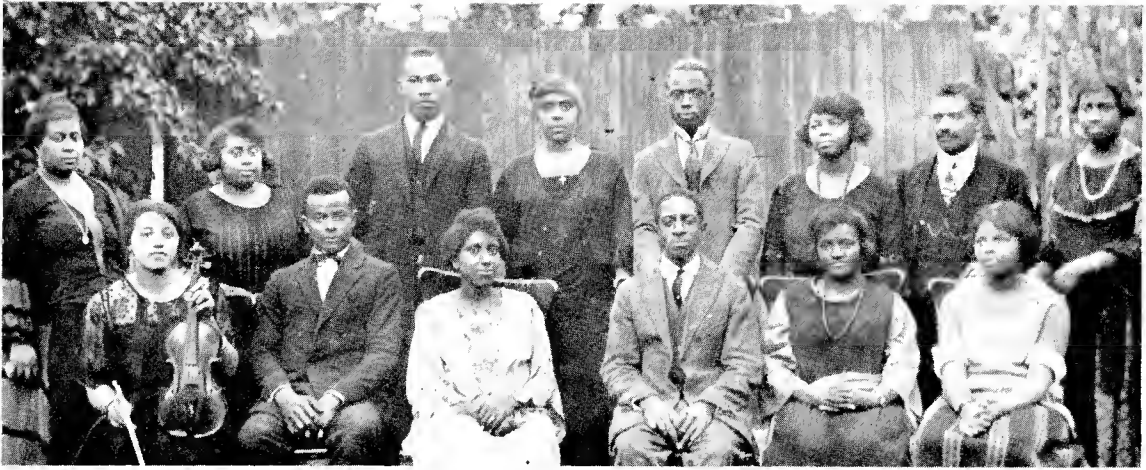
### FADED PAGES FROM A GLOWING PAST



*Rev. Henry Haywood, local preacher, Rev. Samuel Sturges, Pastor 1917-1921, and Rev. Stewart (a blind preacher) stand at the pulpit (l to r) with the official church Board in front: left standing: Mrs. Annie Cummings, Mrs. Mary Williams, Mrs. Jennie Nixon; right standing: Miss Lydia Schenck, Mrs. Elizabeth Davis, Mrs. Samuel Sturges; seated: (unidentified), Mr. Charles Schenck, Mr. Peter Banks, Mr. Calvin Nixon, Mr. John Anderson, Mr. Thomas Marsh, Mr. Walter Johnson, Mr. Harry Greenwood, Mrs. Lillian Thompson.*



*(l to r) Rev. Samuel Sturges, pastor, Thomas Marsh, organist. The choir members are, 1st row: Lydia Schenck, Elizabeth Davis, Annie Jackson, Lillian Thompson, Mary Schenck Jennings; 2nd row; Annie Van Liew, Nellie Claggett Johnson and Lula Schenck.*



*A choral group directed by Mrs. Joseph Stiles between 1921-1923.*



*Rev. W. C. Cook, pastor  
1949-1959, presents  
Christmas Club gifts to  
Senior Citizens of our  
church.*

*Willing Workers Club 1939 – seated l to r: Claudine Cummings, Anna Jennings, Edith Elliott, Ruth Bergen, Geneva Miller, Alice Jennings, Hulda Peterson; standing: Sara Thomas, Gertrude Wright, Estelle Brown, Rev. Solomon Hill, Mary Bergen, Thelma Miller, Elsie Garretson.*



The Reverend W. C. Cook was assigned to this church in 1949. Under his leadership, Mt. Zion was renovated both inside and outside. The kitchen was modernized, making it one of the most attractive in the community. The church entrance was beautified, the parsonage was improved, the windows in the present church which gave a stained glass effect were decorated by Mrs. Cook; Stewardess Board B gave the Communion Table; a new piano was purchased by the Sunday School; the Gold Cross and Candlestick Holders were presented by Oscar Z. Roseberry; the offering plates were given by the Willing Workers Club on their 30th anniversary in November 1958; the cross on the organ was given in 1946 in memory of Nathan Jennings, son and brother of the Henry Jennings Sr. Family, who was a casualty in World War II.

Jennings Court in Robeson Village (a public housing project) was named in Nathan's honor, and two other casualties from our congregation were similarly honored — Sample Road is named for Thomas L. Sample, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sample; and Bergen Court is named for Harry Bergen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Bergen Sr.

The Pulpit Bible was given by the Pastor's Aid in December 1953, during the presidency of Mrs. Essie Jones. The two Pulpit Flags were given in memory of the late Mrs. Annie Cummings by her daughters, Mrs. Hulda Peterson and Mrs. Claudine Lewis.

The Mt. Zion Chorale Group was organized during the Reverend Cook's administration. He also instituted a Christmas Club for senior citizens 70 years of age and over. Reverend Cook served as President of the New Brunswick Council of Churches, the Ministerial Alliance of New Brunswick, and the New Brunswick Urban League. He served on the Boards of the Neighborhood House, the New Brunswick Chapter of the American Red Cross; and was a member of the Community Welfare Council, Secretary of the New Brunswick Ministers' Alliance, and was a member of the New Brunswick Branch NAACP.

Mrs. Anna Howard was commissioned as a missionary during Reverend Cook's tenure and today she serves on the Pulpit Staff.

In April 1959 Reverend Cook was assigned to St. Paul A.M.E. in Orange, and Reverend James W. Waters was appointed to Mt. Zion.

*Rev. W.C. Cook, Pastor 1949-1959.*





*Rev. James W. Waters,  
Pastor, 1959-1964.*



During the pastorate of the Reverend Waters very successful Rally Days were conducted. During Women's Days, Mrs. Waters presented talented women from other New Jersey cities and the Philadelphia area. Representatives of the Council of United Church Women were usually present and brought greetings from that group. Mrs. Waters was a Vice-President of the local Council of Church Women and also served the State Council as Corresponding Secretary. She was elected to the General Conference and the General Board of the A.M.E. Church while in New Brunswick.

Reverend Waters assumed a very prominent role in community affairs. He was an officer of the Ministerial Alliance of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Council of Churches, and served on the Board of the New Brunswick Urban League. He was the first black pastor to join the Clergy Club of New Brunswick, and served as its Secretary and Treasurer. He was also a Candidate for the New Brunswick City Commission, the first of our race to run for public office in the history of New Brunswick. He was a fore-runner to Aldrage B. Cooper Jr. who grew up attending the church school of Mt. Zion Church, and was to become the first member of our ethnic group to serve as a member of the New Brunswick Board of Education. Mr. Cooper later was elected to the presidency of the City Council, and still later he also served as mayor of the City of New Brunswick. He credits Reverend Waters with having opened the door

through which he would later pass to become the city's chief administrative officer.

Perhaps the most significant single event of the five years of Reverend Waters' administration was the organization of the North Stelton A.M.E. Church during the Conference year 1963-64. Pastor Waters, with the able assistance of Reverend Anna L. Howard, one of the Associate Ministers of Mt. Zion Church, conducted a survey, and thereby determined the need for a church in the rapidly growing North Stelton community of Piscataway Township. After several exploratory meetings with interested members of that community, an organizational meeting was called, and the Reverend D. M. Owens, Presiding Elder of the New Brunswick District, came and formally organized the North Stelton A.M.E. Church. In its role as "mother church," or sponsoring church, Mt. Zion, through the leadership of Reverend Waters, provided the resources, the manpower, and very often the financial assistance that was needed to shepherd the new congregation into growth and maturity.

Reverend Water renovated the parsonage, and made many improvements to the church until his transfer in August 1964, to Bethel A.M.E. Church, Germantown, Pennsylvania.

Reverend Waters now serves as one of the Presiding Elders of the New Jersey Conference, his current assignment is Presiding Elder of the Atlantic City District.

## The Fullness of Our Years

Reverend Henry A. Hildebrand was transferred from St. James A.M.E. Church, Atlantic City, to assume the leadership of Mt. Zion on the first Sunday in September 1964. During the years he has served in New Brunswick, plans have been made for the building of a completely new edifice. A Building and Expansion Fund, starting with a deposit of \$238.80 on June 29, 1964, has now been increased to more than \$75,000. A portion of this fund was acquired through bequests left to the church in the will of the late Deaconess Virginia Worsham, in 1966, and from the estate of the late Roger and Ruby Birt in 1975.

During the observance of Men's Day, July 9, 1967, three of the Hildebrand brothers, members of one of the largest A.M.E. ministerial families, served together in the pulpit of our church. This marked only the second time that the Reverends Richard A. (now Bishop), Walter L., and Henry A. Hildebrand had officiated together during a church service.

The youth of Mt. Zion held a successful Rally Day on Sunday, August 20, 1967. Jackie Robinson, former Brooklyn Dodger baseball great, was the featured speaker.

In October 1971, the church reported the sum of \$10,800 which is the largest amount collected in a single effort in the history of the church! Church rallies have been reaching unprecedented marks of achievement, indicating that the congregation realizes that expansion of facilities of Mt. Zion requires a consistent system of adequate financing.

Not only has the fourteen year administration of Pastor Hildebrand been marked by unprecedented records of financial contributions, but it has also been noted by the continuous acquisition of additional properties and holdings by the congregation.

In 1966 the church acquired the first piece of property that it had added to its holdings since 1894, a period of nearly seventy years. After nearly a year of conferences and meetings with the mayor, council and city attorney for the township of Piscataway, an agreement was made whereby the township deeded to the Trustees of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church a three acre tract of land, located in the North Stelton community of the township, to be used expressly for the purpose of erecting an African Methodist Episcopal Church for the people of the township. Legal title was taken for this property on November 1, 1966.

In the month of October 1967, the year of our 140th Anniversary celebration, the church acquired the second piece of property, by the purchasing of a 30 X 90 foot lot at 29 Division Street used to provide off street parking for the members of the congregation. This property was purchased for the sum of \$5,500 and was paid for in cash.

On June 1, 1969 the congregation further expanded its property holdings by taking title to a spacious and elegant house, located at 3 Llewellyn Place, in one of the most desirable residential areas in the city of New Brunswick. This lovely house is located next door to the home of the Mayor of the City of New Brunswick, and now serves as the home,



*Pastor's Family  
Reginald F. Hildebrand,  
son, Shawn L.  
Hildebrand, daughter,  
Rev. Hildebrand*

or parsonage for the pastor of our church. This valued piece of real estate was acquired at a cost of just under \$40,000, and in the eight years since its acquisition the mortgage indebtedness has been reduced to less than \$14,000.

On April 1, 1977, in this our Sesqui-Centennial year our congregation made its most recent addition to its property holdings. On this date we acquired from the Housing and Re-development Authority of the city of New Brunswick a one and-a-quarter acre city block, bounded by New, Neilson, Morris and John Streets, situated right in the heart of the inner city community. The negotiations for this prime parcel of land, with its potential tax base for the city of New Brunswick, took more than five years, from 1972 to 1977. However after a great many fruitless and frustrating meetings with the city, county, state and federal officials, this property was finally secured as the site for a spacious and functional new church and community center which our church proposed to build. The Ground Breaking Ceremony for this new facility has already been held, the architects and planners are completing the final drafts of the new building plans, and a consortium of banks and other money lending institutions are currently reviewing our records and resources for the purpose of certifying our church for the funds needed for construction. It is now unquestionably the plan, purpose and prayer of this congregation to begin its next century and a half in a brand new facility, designed and dedicated to serve our own, as well as the future generations.

Perhaps our congregation's most significant achievement during this our Sesqui-Centennial year, has been in the construction of a very lovely and functional new church and multi-purpose center for "our daughter congregation" in the North Stelton community.

Pastor Hildebrand is now ably assisted by the Reverend Edward E. Adams, who serves as the Assistant Pastor and Minister to the Youth of our congregation. They have worked together in the planning and supervision of this project. The New Jersey Annual Conference gave its financial backing and blessings to show its faith in the future growth and development of this new congregation. The building is now more than one half completed, and formal dedicatory services have been scheduled for January 1, 1978. The Rt. Reverend Richard Allen Hildebrand, the presiding bishop of our Conference, and the brother of our pastor will officiate for this historic occasion.

If one attempted to summarize or characterize the prevailing spirit, or the underlying philosophy of the "Hildebrand years" for our congregation, it would in all probability be found in a constantly growing

awareness of our church's responsibility to, and for others. This orientation to, and this awareness of others is evidenced through the following programs and ministries to which we subscribe:

- 1- An Overseas Ministry: On the First Sunday in January, 1976 our congregation committed itself to contribute to the monthly support and upkeep of a pastor and his family, who is serving in one of our overseas stations in the little country of Guyana.
- 2- On the First Sunday in January 1977, our congregation made still another commitment to contribute each month for the construction of the Agnes Brogdon Hildebrand Chapel, being built for one of our small congregations out on the reservation, or the location as it is called, in South Africa. This chapel is being named to honor the mother of our pastor, who has been for more than 75 years, active in the missionary society of the African Methodist Episcopal church.
- 3- Exchange Students: Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lane Jr. and their three daughters, all very active members of our church, provided a "home away from home" for a visiting student from Kenya, West Africa while she was a student here at the Gibbons School. The members of our congregation also became a sort of "extended family" for her for the entire year that she was in our midst.
- 4- Transportation For The Elderly: A fine group of young men of our church have volunteered their time and the use of their automobiles to provide transportation to and from church for the large number of senior citizen members who very much want to attend the services of the church. This "ministry of kindness" is provided each week, at no cost to them or the church.
- 5- A Tape Ministry: The worship services of our church are recorded each Sunday on cassette tapes. At the close of the service a group of dedicated volunteers take the recorded services to the hospitals, nursing homes, or to the residences of every sick or shut-in member of our church.
- 6- We Feel Our Brother's Care: This congregation has, through the years been unusually kind and generous to those in need of our help. Time after time our hearts, as well as our pocket-books have been opened, and as the Lord has blessed us, we have in turn been a blessing to others.

Others Lord, yes others, Let this our motto be:  
"Help us to live to serve others,  
That we may someday live with Thee."





*Rev. Hildebrand and Family  
(l to r): Reginald, Shawn,  
Rev. Hildebrand, Mrs. Agnes  
Hildebrand (Rev. Hildebrand's  
mother), Benjamin Hildebrand  
Jr.*

Reverend Hildebrand well deserves the title by which he is often referred: "everybody's pastor". He is now serving his fourteenth year as the shepherd of our flock. No other pastor in the 150 year history of our church has served for that length of time. Not only has he ably served our own congregation as pastor, preacher, and administrator, but he has also found the time and the energy to be actively involved in a great many other responsibilities.

From 1972-74 Reverend Hildebrand served as president of the Greater New Brunswick area Council of Churches, and currently chairs its committee on Ecumenical Relations, and serves on its Executive Committee. He serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Rutgers Preparatory School. He serves the county detention home as a visiting chaplain.

Reverend Hildebrand has also served on several occasions as the Chaplain for the day for the New Jersey State Legislature, and was invited to give the invocation for the oath taking ceremony of the new Speaker of the House, and for the State of the State Message delivered by Governor Brynden T. Byrne in January of 1977. He serves on the Citizen's Advisory Board for Rutgers University. He also serves our connectional church as Director of Ministerial Training for the New Jersey Annual Conference, and also as Chairman of its Board of Examiners. He further serves as secretary of the Conference Board of Trustees, and was just recently named to be the Executive Director of the Fund for Theological Education of the First Episcopal District, A.M.E. Church.

His services are constantly in demand as counselor, advisor, invocator, benedictor, visitor, greeter, whatever it is, you name it, and if it is of benefit to the church or community, Pastor Hildebrand will soon be involved.

Victor Hugo, French poet and novelist, once wrote

"Nothing is quite so powerful as an idea whose time has come." We, as a congregation believe that our present pastor was for our church that "Idea whose time had come." When we look back and view the improvements, and the changes, and the new ideas that have taken root and prospered during the past decade . . . and as we contemplate the future, and have dreams of even more interesting and exciting days in the years to come, we do conclude that Pastor Hildebrand was indeed for us, the personification of that idea whose time had really come . . . and so . . . we begin our next century-and-a-half with a page taken from the book of the late John F. Kennedy . . . "some men see things as they are," he used to often quote, "and they ask why. But I dream dreams that never were, and ask, why not?"

And we ask, indeed, why not?

Members of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church have maintained an unbroken tradition of character, courage, loyalty, and vision — attributes that have contributed greatly to the successful leadership of the pastors who were assigned to the church. It is our fervent hope that future days may reflect fruitfully these words of Thomas Carlyle: *All work is as seed sown: it grows and spreads, and sows itself anew.* God grant that we, like our forefathers, may continue planting, not only for ourselves, but also for posterity.

The following church auxiliaries were organized and came into being during Reverend Hildebrand's pastorate at Mt. Zion:

The Inspirational Chorus - 1967

The Prayer Circle - 1969

The Youth Choir - 1973

The Jubilee Choir - 1974

The Laymen's Organization - 1974

## Mt. Zion Breaks Ground For New Church and Community Center

On Sunday June 30th, 1974, historic Mt. Zion Church of New Brunswick, New Jersey, after having served the New Brunswick community from the same site for more than 148 years, decided to cast its lot with the future, and broke ground for the erection of a half-million dollar church and community center. Bishop Ernest Lawrence Hickman, the Presiding Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the State of New Jersey, officiated at this historic ceremony. He was ably assisted by the Reverend John Wesley Johnson, presiding elder of the New Brunswick District, and the Reverend Henry A. Hildebrand, pastor of Mt. Zion Church.

Other participants in this "once in a lifetime" experience included some of the oldest, as well as some of the youngest members of the congregation. Mrs. Ruby Birt, Mrs. Rebecca Robinson, Mrs. Alice Sample, Mrs. Luvenia Harris, Miss Annie Fletcher and Miss Helen Woolsey, all octogenarians with more than a half of century of continuous membership in the church represented one end of the age spectrum,

while Donna Lane, Duane Moore and Jock Gregory, all four year olds represented the generations following.

Also sharing in this happy occasion with the members of Mt. Zion Church were newly elected Mayor Aldrage B. Cooper Jr., whose father was for many years a member of the Board of Trustees of the church, and whose grandfather was one of its early pastors. Also former Mayor Patricia Q. Sheehan, now serving as the Commissioner of Community Affairs for the State of New Jersey, Mrs. Richard V. Mulligan, widow of a recent Chairman of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and David L. Williams, assistant executive secretary of the Authority.

Pastor Hildebrand, in an interview with the local newspaper stated that the almost century-and-a-half old congregation had outgrown the facilities of the old building in which they now worship. "This fact," he said, "was never more dramatically demonstrated than it was at the service just preceeding the ground breaking ceremony, when worshippers had to be turned away from the church because there was literally not room for anyone else to even find standing room in the sanctuary."



*Reverend Cyrus E. Grant, Mrs. Richard Mulligan Sr., Aldrage B. Cooper, Reverend Henry A. Hildebrand*



*Presiding Elder John Wesley Johnson,  
Bishop Ernest L. Hickman, Reverend  
Nathaniel Burgess, Pastor - Reverend  
Henry A. Hildebrand.*





*Prayer Circle: (l to r) Rosetta Cook, Mary White, Beatrice Simpson, Anna Fletcher and Georgia Taylor*



*Inspiration Chorus: (l to r) Beatrice Grant, Mary Freeman, Thomas Jennings, Rev. H. A. Hildebrand, Georgia Taylor and Phyllis Thompson*



*Lay Organization (1st row – l to r): Mayble Bryant, Gloria Allen, Alberta Murphy. (2nd row): Ann Penn, Arthur Thomas, Rosetta Cooke. (3rd row): Charles Searight, Wanita Gregory, Mary White, Julius Bryant*



*Jubilee Choir*



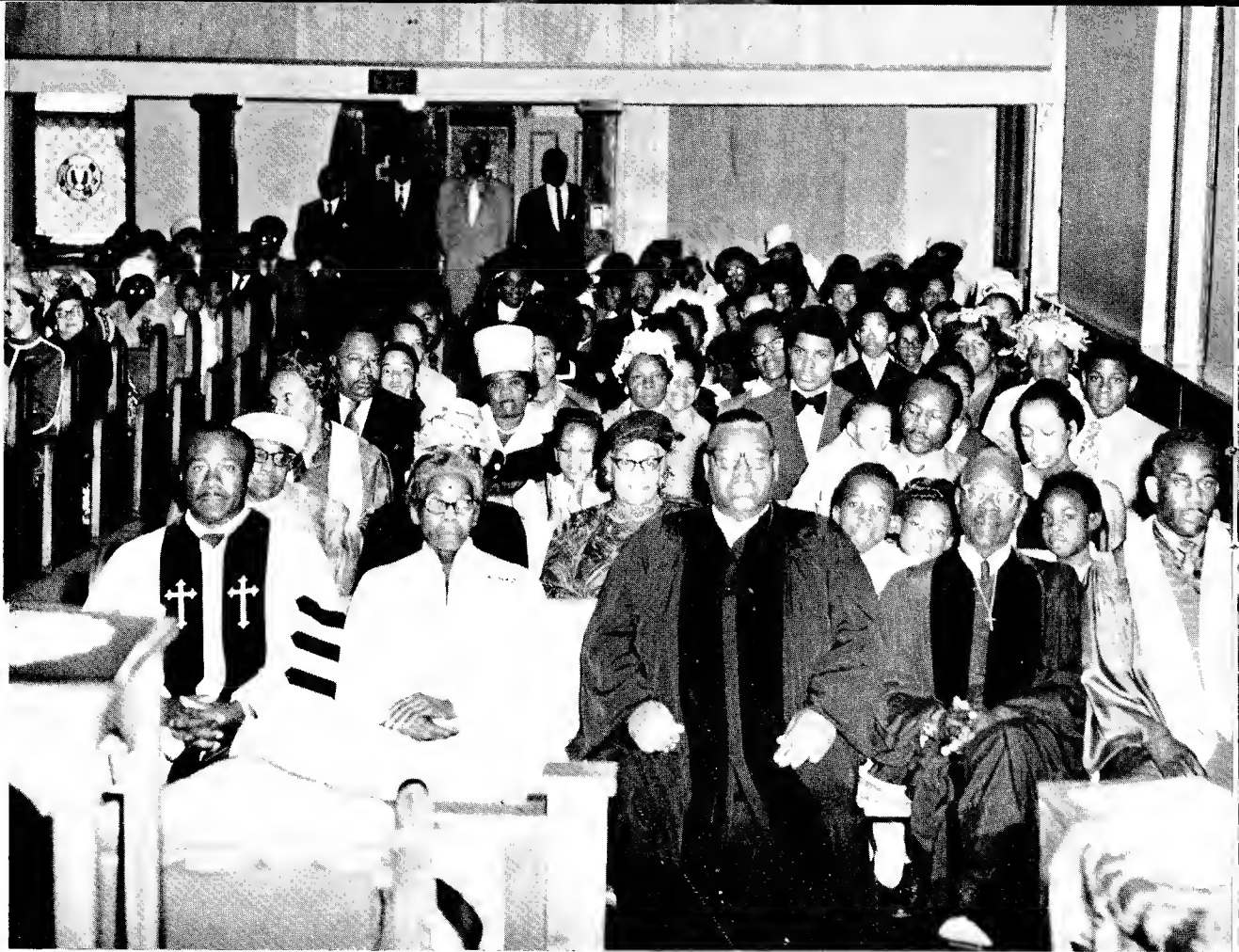
*Youth Choir (front l to r)  
David, Derek, Troy, Delores  
Adams, Rev. Edward E.  
Adams. (2nd row - l to r):  
Karen, Dawn, Pam, Charlyn,  
Connie. (standing - l to r):  
Robert, Tracey, Claudia,  
Michelle, Denise, Dawn,  
Karen, Pam.*



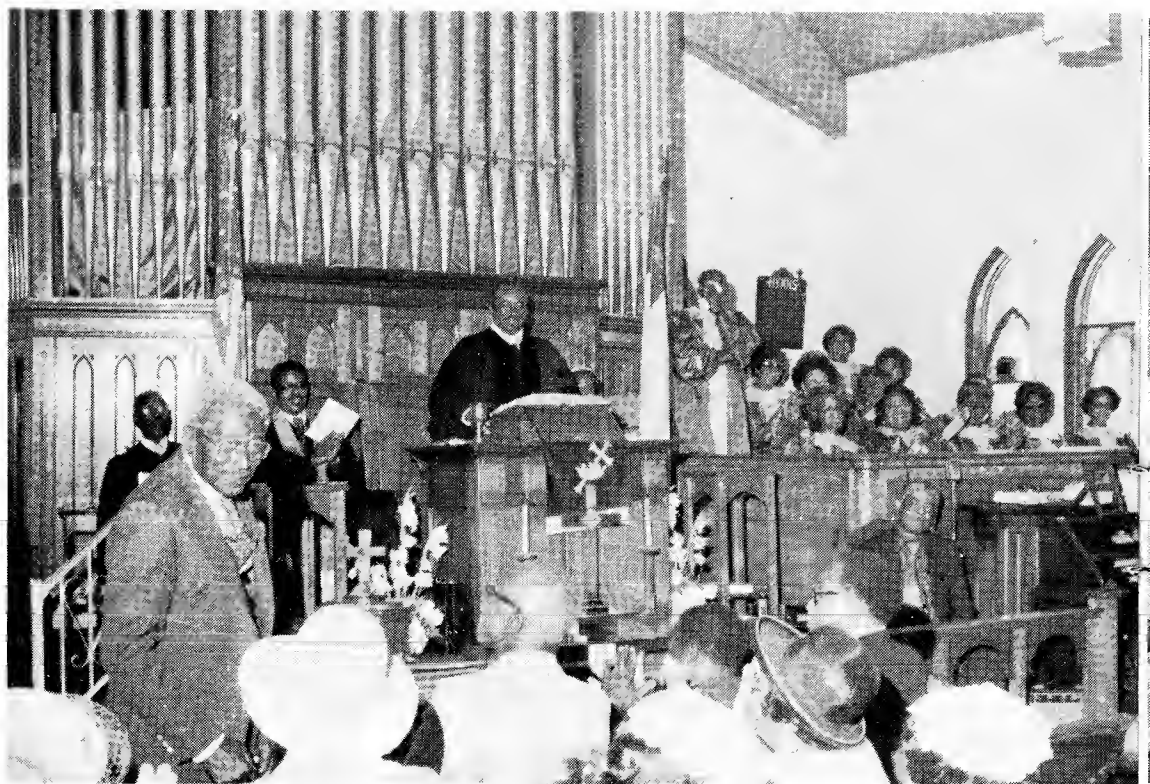
*Senior Choir*

*Mt. Zion Chorale (first row  
- l to r): Cordia Fleming,  
Gwendolyn Adams, Ann  
Penn, Bessie Jackson, Anna  
Mae Jones, Lillian Carman.  
(Back): Horace Robinson,  
George Bright, James  
Jennings*





*SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE*

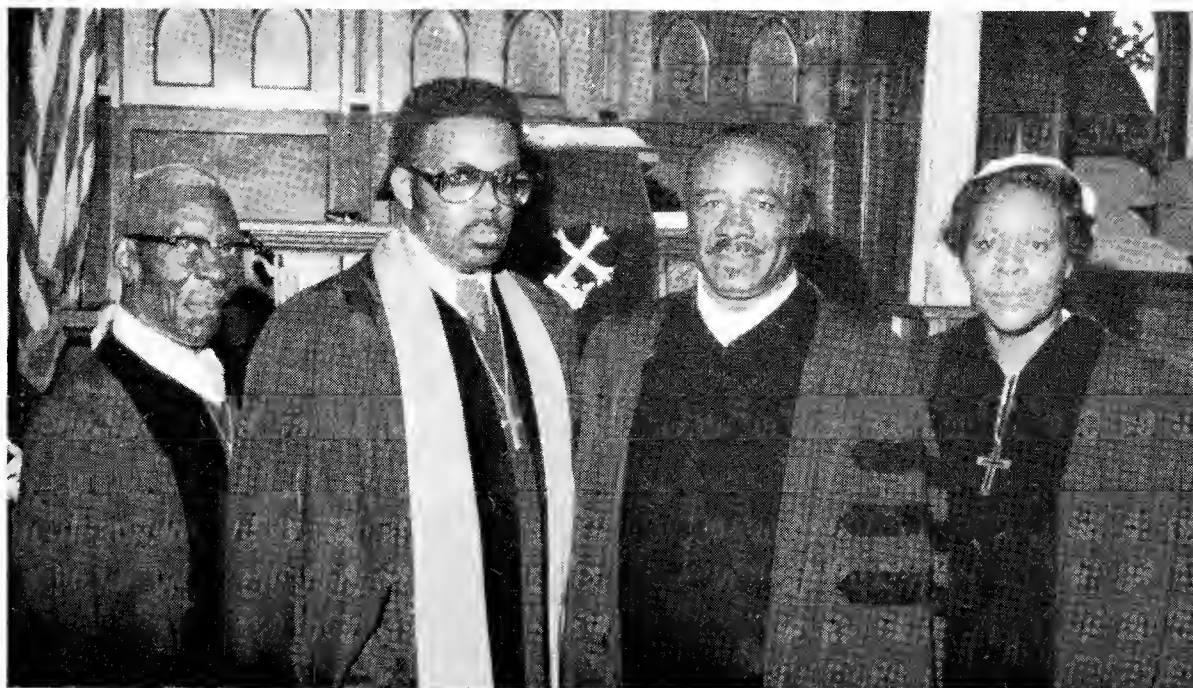








*Willing Workers Club: First Row (l to r) Anna J. Williams, Martha Wilson, Hulda Peterson, Edith Elliott; Second Row (l to r) Alice Archibald, Louise Roseberry*



*Pulpit Staff: (l to r) Rev. Cyrus E. Grant, Rev. Edward E. Adams, Rev. Henry A. Hildebrand, Pastor; Rev. Lula M. Byrd*



*Nurses Unit: Seated (l to r) Ms. Swane, Ms. Haynes, Ms. Spradley; Standing (l to r) Ms. Adams, Rev. Hildebrand Ms. Murphy*





*Senior Missionary Society: First Row (l to r) Mary Salter, Christine Jordan, Mother Agnes L. Hildebrand, Lisa Hildebrand, Rev. Henry A. Hildebrand, Essie Jones, Minnie Betters; Second Row (l to r) Mable Taylor, Manilla Taylor, Cora Young, Delores Adams, Rosetta Cook, Lula M. Byrd*



*Commission on Finance: Seated (l to r) Joseph Byrd, Julius A. Bryant, Louise Roseberry, Rufus Lewis  
Standing (l to r) Arthur Thomas, Edward Lane Jr., Eugene V. Hildebrand*



*Women's Reserve Auxiliary: Seated (l to r) Rosetta Cook, Josephine Jenkins, Essie Jones  
Standing (l to r) Gloria Allen, Mary White, Mary Matchet, Wanita Gregory*



*Above Right – Ladies Ushers Board: Front (l to r) Elizabeth Ransome, Joyce Jordan Moore, Otr Rush; Back (l to r) Pertell Swane, Vera Brooks, June Harrison, June Robinson, Alicia Jordan, Ruth James, Charlotte Thomas, Arlene Garretson. Above Left – Board of Stewards: Front (l to r) Hulda Peterson, Christine Jordan, Rev. Henry Hildebrand; Second row (l to r) Essie Jones, Louise Roseberry, Arthur Thomas, Joseph Byrd; Standing (l to r) Julius Bryant, Rufus Lewis, George Bright, Leroy Nash, William Davidson.*



*Stewardess Board No. 1 (l to r) Rev. Edward E. Adams, Alberta Murphy, Musa Lewis, Hulda Peterson, Aida Richardson, Rose Murray*



*Stewardess Board No. 2 (l to r) Rosetta Cook, Mabel Bryant, Lucie Cole, Lucille Gray, Rev. Edward E. Adams, Roxanne Hathaway, Gertrude Wright*



*Stewardess Board No. 3: First Row  
(l to r) Annie Fletcher, Minnie Betters,  
Annie Jackson; Second Row (l to r)  
Pauline Stout, Phyllis Thompson, Wanita  
Morrison, Mary Salter*



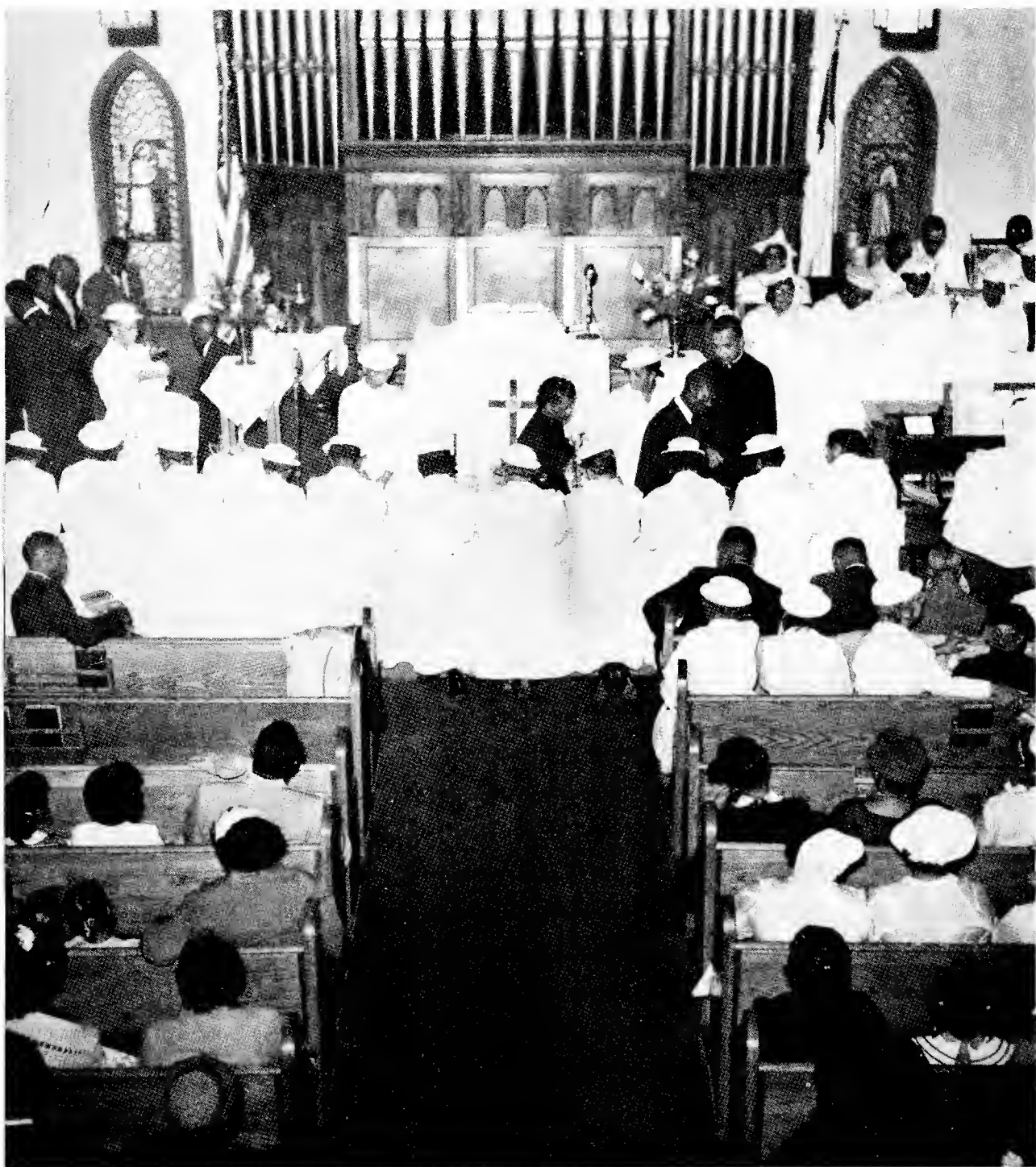
*Stewardess Board No. 4 (seated  
– l to r): Corine Henry, Maxine  
Gatlin, Victoria Barksdale,  
Mary East. (standing – l to r):  
Ann Penn, Sarah Thomas,  
Clarice Thomas*



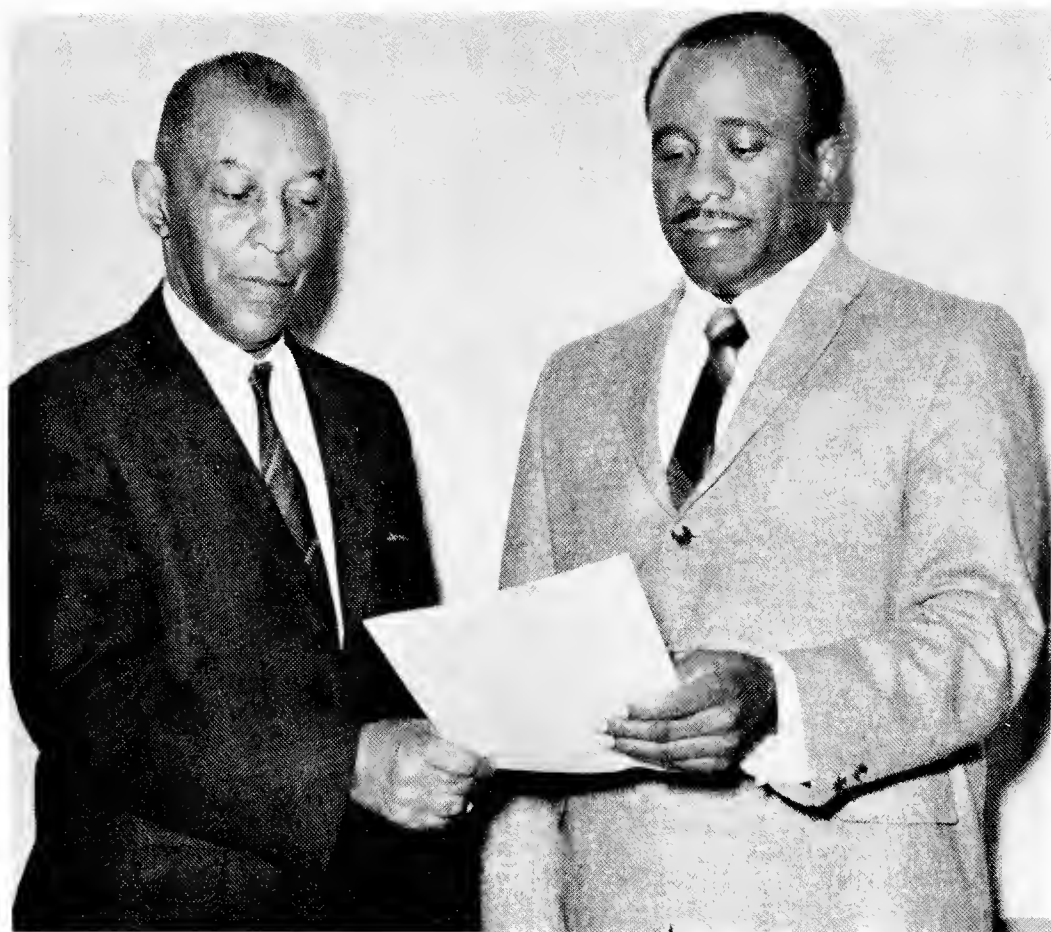
*At Left – Male Ushers Board (l to r) Jacob Jones, Robert Milton,  
John Taylor, William Robinson, Tracey Lindsey, Mersc Sims;  
Above – Board of Trustees (l to r) Horace McGhee, John Taylor,  
William Robinson, Marvin Rush, Roger Jordan, Dorsey Miller*







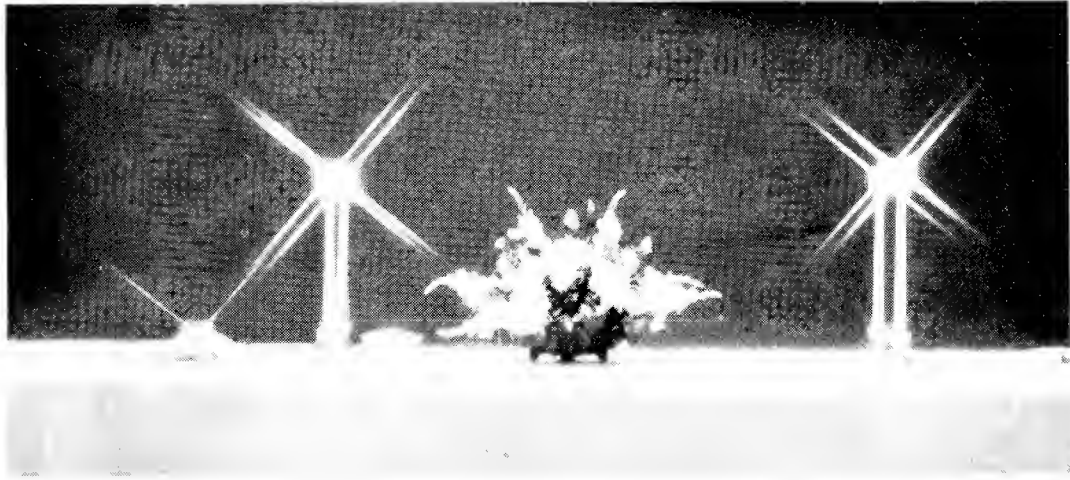
*Communion Service 1962 – Rev. J.W. Waters, Pastor.*



*Rev. C. Shelton joins our pastor, Rev. H. Hildebrand in planning the Civil Rights Protest March to City Hall demonstrating support for the Freedom March in Selma, Alabama.*

*Rev. Hildebrand leads a contingent of community sympathizers in the Civil Rights March.*





### A Bouquet of Memories

Each member of the congregation has been a part of this great life, a part of the living history of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. Each has personal memories of certain activities and events, certain people and relationships which have most influenced his or her life. Each has personal memories of the joys and sorrows, the smiles and tears which for the individual is rich treasure of that person's own Mt. Zion — the personal heritage of faith received through the community. These personal memories with their deeply significant meaning cannot be recorded here, but a large

bouquet of recollections with their nostalgic color and tone may stimulate some of those very precious memories which will ever remain your personal possession and ever be the bond of your affection for Mt. Zion and your love for the community.

Remember . . .



*Mr. and Mrs. Henry E. Jennings Sr.  
Members of Mt. Zion for more than 60 years.  
He served as a trustee for more than 40 years.  
She served as Stewardess for more than 30 years.*



*Minnie Miller Demby and her tireless  
efforts in the Willing Workers Club.*

## **Remember . . .**

our church volunteers helping at the Bayard Street U.S.O. during World War II . . .

our contributions to the United Fund; the New Brunswick Urban League; the Joint Hospital Fund and the YWCA Building Funds (through the Willing Workers Club) . . .

## **Remember . . .**

Stewardess Board B's Baby Contests . . .

Stewardess Board C's Feasts of Harvests . . .

the time certain members were afraid of being left alone in the basement because of graves nearby . . .  
the Sunday School picnics at Bellwood Park, Boynton Beach, Keansburg . . .  
the Sunday School Honor Roll during the pastorate of Reverend Samuel Sturges . . .

the masterful playing of our organ at the dedicatory services by Carl Diton . . .

## **Remember . . .**

Mary L. Schenck Jennings was the first Junior Stewardess of our time. She was appointed on the Stewardess Board when we had just one Board (1924) . . .

the fine anniversaries of the Golden Leaf Chorus . . .  
the Programs of Songs given by the Choirs and Usher Boards . . .

the Imperial Dramatics Club's fine plays . . .

the Helping Hand Club's Dinners under the leadership of the late Mrs. Dora Price (this club was organized as a Coal Club of Mt. Zion; the group left in 1925, to be organized as the present Helping Hand Club) . . .

. . . the Willing Workers Club plays, Coffee Hours, and Smorgasbords . . .

Stewardess Board A's Dinners . . .

## **Remember . . .**

Elsie Mason heading Stewardess Board C for over 35 years — the only president of that Board, and Marion Lane serving as that Board's Secretary for over 25 years . . .

that our "sister church" — the Ebenezer Baptist Church of New Brunswick — was organized in 1873 by a group of ex-slaves who worshipped at a Handy Street residence until 1878 when the group built a small church on the present site, corner of Lee Avenue and Comstock Street . . .

Miss Mamie Skillman organized the first Junior Choir and Mrs. Lizzie Davis the first Vesper Choir wearing choir robes . . .

Reverend Stiles and his wife, both talented musicians, also organized a Junior Choir. Mrs. Stiles conducted this group . . .

one of her soloists was Elsie Johnson.

Other church organists have included: Mrs. Minnie Miller Demby, Mrs. Anne Jennings Williams, Mrs. Serita Jennings McRae, Thomas H. Jennings, Mrs. Eugene I. Jennings, Mrs. Grace Raddall Thompson, and Herman Scott . . .

Mrs. Mary L. Schenck Jennings was chorister of the Senior Choir for 35 years . . .

## **Remember . . .**

Our organist and music through the years — Miss Kate Marsh was once our organist . . .

Brother Henson organized one of the best trained choirs of that time . . .

Miss Marsh was succeeded by her sister, Mrs. Sidonia Scudder . . .

other organists were: Miss Mamie Skillman (later known as "Mame Robinson"), William Green, Mrs. "Lizzie" Davis, Thomas Marsh . . .

during Thomas Marsh's Period as the church organist, Miss Lydia Schenck directed the choir . . .

## **Remember . . .**

The fabulous Fashion Shows of the Ladies Aid during the leadership of Mrs. Annie Cummings — this organization had its beginnings over 50 years ago . . . a group of women formed the "Fair Committee" and held an Annual Fair which was held several nights during a given week. Many pretty handmade articles were sold. Miss Lydia Schenck, Miss Viola Schenck, Mrs. Julia Venable, Mrs. Anna Timbrook Jackson, Mrs. Myra Staats, Mrs. Julia Franklin, Mrs. Elsie Saunderson, Mrs. A. Doughty, and Mrs. Annie Van Liew were among the active members of this committee . . .

in later years, this group became known as the "Ladies Aid" . . .

## **Remember . . .**

The ministers who "got their start" at Mt. Zion . . .

Reverend Albert Clark

Reverend Henry Haywood Gregory

Reverend Samuel I. Matchett

Reverend B.B. Swinson

Reverend Cyrus Grant

Reverend Mrs. Anna Howard

Reverend James Van Horn

Reverend Mrs. Lula Byrd





*The living room in the new parsonage.*







*MOTHERS OF THE CHURCH*

*The three Mothers of the Church pictured above are (l to r): Mrs. Virginia Worsham, Mrs. Pauline Brown and Mrs. Hattie Fletcher. Oscar Roseberry stands behind them.*

Mrs. Worsham was active on Stewardess Board One for many years. Her dedication to the church was not only apparent in life, but was expressed eloquently at the time of her death because she willed her property to Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. She came to New Brunswick about fifty years ago and stayed at the home of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Carman until her home on Eighth Avenue, Highland Park was built. In a tribute to her at the Women's Day Tea on March 8, 1964, Alice Archibald said of her, "Peg" her a friend to all age levels, one who is always on the go — a night is never too cold, never too dark, never too stormy for her to visit a sick person. And it didn't have to be a special friend; she has a truly Christian Spirit."

Mrs. Pauline Brown was the "Spark Plug" of the Deaconess Board. She was affectionately known as "Aunt Polly" or "Vineie". She came to New Brunswick at the age of 20 and married James Wright at the age of 21. Of this union four children were born. In 1921 she married Mr. Brown. She organized the Golden Leaf Chorus of Mt. Zion and served on Stewardess Boards One and Two for 38 years. In a similar tribute as mentioned above Mrs. Archibald said to her, "Mrs. Brown, you have kept before us a realization that one does not really grow old, but becomes old by not growing; you have remained young by holding to your dreams, by maintaining a cheerful attitude in spite of life's ups and downs."



*STEWARDESS BOARD ONE - 1962*

*First row, (l to r): Mrs. Elizabeth Carman, Mrs. Harriet Van Derveer, Mrs. Pauline Brown, Mrs. Ada Jennings and Mrs. Lillian Thompson; 2nd row: Mrs. Hulda Peterson, Mrs. Muriel Jackson, Mrs. Virginia Worsham, Mrs. Ruth Eato, Mrs. Maude Blakeley, and Mrs. Erie Adams.*

## Lest we Forget

Mt. Zion has its share of outstanding citizens, among whom are: Mrs. Sarah Curry, Mrs. Amelia Robinson, Mrs. Ellen Hart Wales, the Misses Long, Edward Lane Jr., Edwin Bess — teachers; A.B. Cooper Sr., former lab technician at Rutgers University and author of "Foot Prints of Prince Hall Masonry in New Jersey"; J. Herbert Carman, New Brunswick's first Negro policeman; government workers Jeanette Bryant, Minnie Miller Demby, Anne J. Williams, Belma J. Brooks, Serita J. McRae, Corinne S. Henry, Jean Cooper, Harry A. Crumidy Sr.; Stanely Wittaker, parole officer in Berkeley, California . . .

Henry Jennings Jr., postman . . .

Dolores Adams, lab technician, Rutgers Department of Microbiology . . .

Ann P. Bess, Lois M. Bryan, Mrs. J. Herbert Carman, sales clerks (Mrs. Carman is also Assistant Buyer) . . .

Clarence Bergen Jr., director of a community center in Scranton, Pennsylvania . . .

Vivan P. Anderson, Alice J. Archibald, social workers . . .

Doctors David Anthony and Ralph Birt (surgeon now practicing in Baltimore, Maryland) . . .

Dr. Chester G. Peterson, local dentist . . .

James Twyman, shift supervisor, Calco . . .

William Jackson who spearheaded the organization of the Holmes Marshall Fire Company . . .

William Reid, parole officer in New Jersey . . .

Claudine C. Lewis, prominent club woman and PTA worker . . .

Mitchell Thomas, outstanding disc jockey in Wilmington, Delaware . . .

Aldrage B. Cooper Jr., president New Brunswick City Council . . .

Oscar Z. Roseberry, photographer . . .

Eugene I. Jennings, carpenter and builder . . .

*Harriet Van Devereer*



### Memories and Dreams

In Memory of Mrs. Harriet VanDeveer

*by Oscar Z. Roseberry*

In this venerable chapel of Old Mt. Zion,  
More than a century is left behind.  
Here our forefathers on aching knees;  
Prayed to God, "Father, lead us, please!"

Take our hands and show us the way,  
To win for our children a freer day.  
Their wood burning stove hardly kept them warm.  
Their kerosene lamps, we've now outgrown.  
Black men in their majestic, long mustach,  
Stood proudly but poorly — with little cash;  
Their women walked with their heads held high,  
Praying some day there'd be you and I.  
Nor did their children whimper and cry;  
For they too believed in you and I.  
For us, our parents worked and prayed,  
And now our own plans must be laid.  
Hasten the time, let us learn to give  
So a new generation can learn to live.

This is the plan — a new church we'll build  
So the dreams of our forefathers may be fulfilled —  
A place of worship to share with others,  
Our love for God and for all our brothers;  
A place for God's children at the Master's feet;  
Where memories and dreams will ever meet.

Your sacrifice will help to make it so,  
Your generous gift the world will know;  
For when the 145 thousand goal is reached,

It will be as a sermon strongly preached —  
And when the new spire rises in this place,  
They'll see your sacrifice, and you'll know  
God's grace.

## THE PASTORS OF MOUNT ZION

The official history of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church naturally follows the sequence of major events recorded in various pastorates through the years. But the story of the church is much more than the sum of these outstanding recorded activities. Through the whole fabric runs the threads of hundreds of individual lives, and each contributes to the color and the strength of the whole. We cannot here reveal what each has done, although the deeds of each has been recorded in the book of life which will one day be opened to the blessed. Here we can but list the names of the ministers who have served our parish.

### Our Pastors Through the Years

1832—1834 . . . . .	Reverend Richard Robinson	1876—1878 . . . . .	Reverend Redmond Faucett
1834—1836 . . . . .	Reverend William Moore	1878—1880 . . . . .	Reverend T. A. Cuff
1836—1837 . . . . .	Reverend Israel Scott	1880—1882 . . . . .	Reverend T. A. Davis
1837—1838 . . . . .	Reverend William Moore	1882—1885 . . . . .	Reverend J. C. Aylor
1838—1839 . . . . .	Reverend J. Balaugh	1885—1889 . . . . .	Reverend L. Sturges
1839—1840 . . . . .	Reverend John Boggs	1889—1890 . . . . .	Reverend W. A. Price
1840—1841 . . . . .	Reverend Henry C. Turner	1890—1891 . . . . .	Reverend A. H. Newton
1841—1842 . . . . .	Reverend H. Grinley	1891—1892 . . . . .	Reverend J. H. Pierce
1842—1843 . . . . .	Reverend H. C. Turner and Reverend A. W. Wayman	1892—1896 . . . . .	Reverend J. Cooper
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1851—1852 . . . . .	Reverend A. C. Crippen	1909—1911 . . . . .	Reverend C. G. Collins
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1854—1855 . . . . .	Reverend J. Young	1912—1913 . . . . .	Reverend J. H. Morgan
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Rickie Henry	Gail Scott
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To happier, sunlit days  
And to precious golden moments  
That will be with us always.

And these fond recollections  
Are treasured in the heart  
To bring us always close to those  
From whom we've had to part.

There is a bridge of memories  
From earth to Heaven above.  
It keeps our dear ones near us . . .  
It's the bridge that we call LOVE.

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of my God than dwell in the  
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Somerset, N.J.

"Congratulations" Mr. and Mrs. Stanley M. Taylor,  
Rahway, N.J.

"Congratulations" Mrs. E.W. Maize and Daughter,  
Rahway, N.J.

"Congratulations" Mr. and Mrs. William Taylor Jr.,  
Perth Amboy, N.J.

"Best Wishes" Mrs. William Taylor and Daughter,  
Rahway, N.J.

"Best Wishes" Mr. and Mrs. Harold Taylor, Rahway,  
N.J.

"Best Wishes" Mrs. Gussie Coleman, Rahway, N.J.

"Best Wishes" Mrs. Adele Ford, Roselle, N.J.

"Congradulations" Mrs. Georgia Goldstein, Roselle,  
N.J.

"Best Wishes" Mrs. Marion Pyatt, Perth Amboy, N.J.

"Best Wishes" Mrs. Cora T. Burrell, Elizabeth, N.J.

"Congratulations" Mr. and Mrs. Richard Natson,  
Linden, N.J.

"Best Wishes" Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Reibel,  
Elizabeth, N.J.

"Best Wishes" Mrs. Frances Randolph, Rahway, N.J.

Congratulations from Charlotte Tomaszewski

150th Anniversary Congratulations! George Royster  
Jacques D. Gregory

Good Luck! from The Style Shop, 355 George St.  
New Brunswick, N.J.

Connie's Specialty Shop

Davidson's Foodtown

To Mamie and Mt. Zion - "if you can't see God in  
front of you, remember he is always in back of  
you." Andrew J. White

Eddie Edwards, Patterson, N.J.

Happy 150th — I'm glad to be a part. Barbara N. White

"All things work together for God" Lola McCoy and  
Family

Best Wishes on your 150th year! Jake Utley,  
Plainfield, N.J.

"It is not what people say about Jesus, but what they  
do for Him that really counts." Mrs. Mamie  
L. White, Somerset, N.J.

Sarkozy's Amoco, 803 Hamilton Street, Somerset,  
N.J. 08873 Telephone 828-2226

He shall give thee the desires of thine heart — Annie  
L. Jackson and Lolita

Best Wishes and success - Mr. and Mrs. William  
Sanders and Family

Congratulations Mount Zion — 150 years of serving  
the community. Teresa A. White

Continue to love each other with true brotherly love.  
Mr. and Mrs. Johnnie W. Jackson, 603 Carpino  
Avenue, Pittsburgh, California

Best Wishes on your 150th. Mrs. Rosalie Gary, East  
Orange, N.J.

Best Wishes on Our 150th Anniversary! Mrs. Christine  
Jordan

## **Boosters**

### **Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church Souvenir Journal**

Mrs. Ruby Hush  
Keisha Harvest  
Mrs. Jean Green  
David and Margaret Hamm  
Barbara M. Saunders  
Telethia Tinely  
Lorraine Ross  
Clarence and Elvira Harris  
Mr. and Mrs. James E. Jennings Sr.  
Adele Glasgow  
Ramona Lowe  
Wilma H. Greason  
David Greason  
Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Lewis  
Kevin Jones  
Mr. Richard Farris, Dionea and Tamika  
Mr. and Mrs. George Fargan  
Mr. and Mrs. Willie William  
Mr. and Mrs. Augusto W. Harris  
Mr. and Mrs. Marget Farris  
Mr. and Mrs. David F. Farris  
G. Matthew R. Farris  
Mr. and Mrs. Horace Jordan  
James M. Carman  
Robert W. Carman  
Michelle Y. Carman  
Robert K. Carman  
Councilman Edwin G. Carman  
Joseph J. Bergen Jr.  
Carolyn L. Carman  
Manuel R. Geraldo  
James P. Gittens  
Mr. and Mrs. William L. Reid  
Mrs. Anna Penn  
Mr. and Mrs. Major Jackson Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Sterling  
Robert L. Twyman  
William H. DeHart  
Miss Elmira DeHart  
Miss Margaret DeHart  
George Bush  
Mr. and Mrs. Everett Barksdale  
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick T. Carman  
Simone Quattlebaum  
Charles J. Johnson  
Alice Coolbough  
Clovine Walker  
Mack L. Harper  
Adele Taylor  
Larry Pridd  
George S. Stratford Jr.  
Joan Scrupski

Doris E. Whittle  
Dr. Louis I. Friedner  
Mercedes Parker  
Judi Kern  
George Sekal  
Terri Soriano  
Louis V. DePaolo  
Joseph Latino  
Alonzo Johnson  
Judith Moore  
Cameron Taylor  
Dr. Robert Calallaro  
Evelyn Dixon  
Jesse Parish  
Mrs. Mary Schenck  
Mrs. Beatrice Simpson  
Mr. and Mrs. Roy Miller  
Mr. and Mrs. James Bryant  
Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Roseberry  
Ms. Frances Dawkins  
Well Wisher  
Ben Franklin Glass Co.  
Slims Fishery  
Janie N. Bowser  
Meyer Namas  
Roy Kessler  
Budd Jewelers  
Freese Camera  
Robert Jenuaitis  
Robert Suber  
Elizabeth Nolnar  
Dennis Thompson  
Dawn Milton  
Edwin Palmer  
M.E. Cohen  
Mr. William Daly  
Mrs. Amelia Robinson  
Muriel Jackson  
Ramona R. Jackson  
Stewart Lee Jackson Jr.  
Russell King  
Barbara White  
June Harrison  
Joyce Moore  
Michelle Swain  
Teresa White  
Frances Dawkins  
Alicia Jordan  
Serita and Karen McRae  
Mr. and Mrs. James M. Brooks and Dwayne  
Hortense Garretson  
Mr. Eddie Wilson

**E. Harvey Myers, Architect Planners**

**Would like to Congratulate**

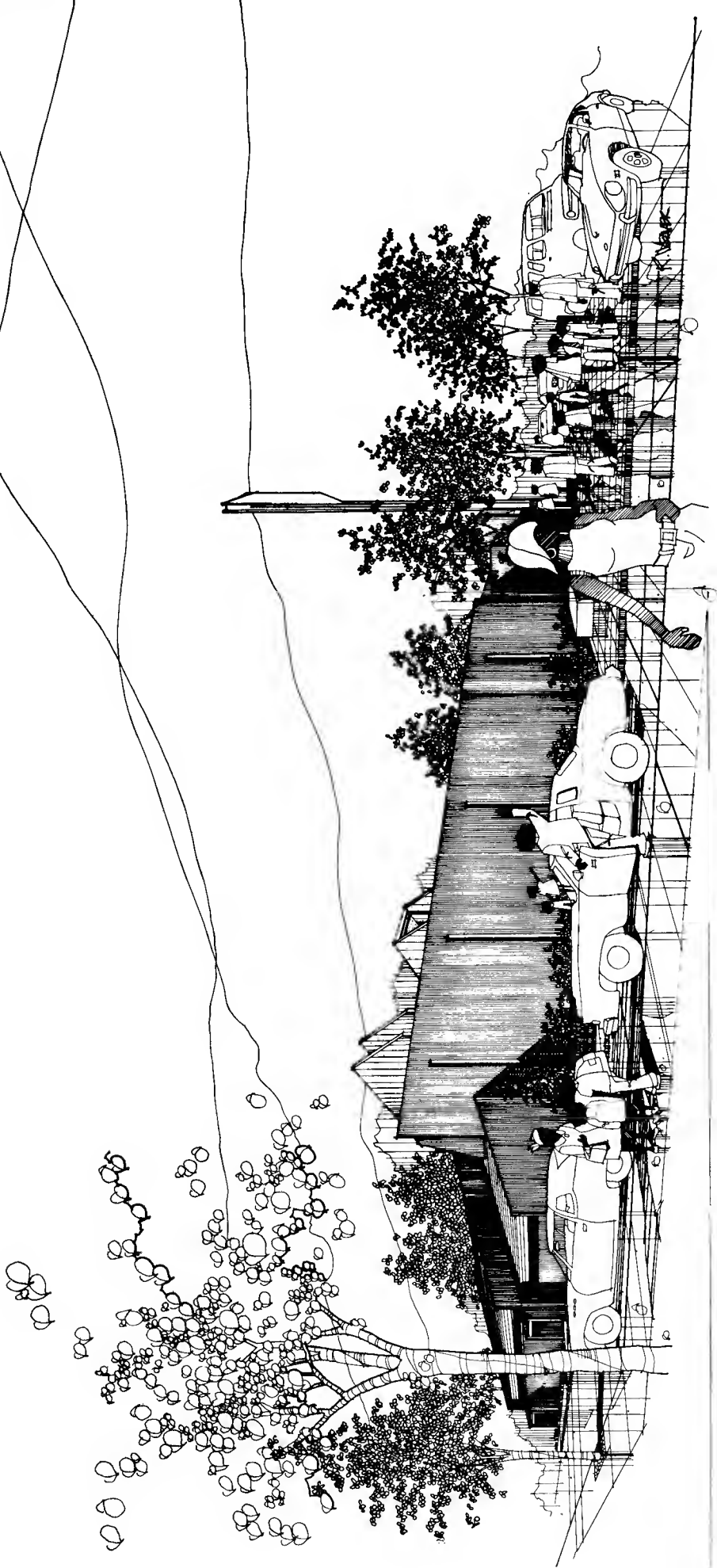
**Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church**

**on their**

**1st 150 years and Best Wishes**

**in the Future.**





PROPOSED NEW CHURCH

